

GLOBAL



**UN
VOLUNTEERS**

FINAL EVALUATION OF UNV'S STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK 2014-2017

FINAL REPORT - CASE STUDIES

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CASE STUDIES



FOSTERING YOUTH VOLUNTEERISM: THE COLLABORATION BETWEEN UNV AND UNICEF IN MOZAMBIQUE

CONTEXT

On 25 January 2012, the Secretary-General of the United Nations announced his Five-Year Action Agenda. It included an explicit reference to the importance of youth and volunteering as a theme and priority for sustainable development, and called on the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) to create a Youth Volunteer programme. In response and in order to formalise UNV's long-standing experience in working with youth, in 2013, UNV developed a Youth Volunteering Strategy (2014-2017).

The strategy was based on consultative processes through which UNV gathered inputs from key stakeholders, youth experts, and young people in order to develop a comprehensive understanding of the realities of young people.



KEY WORDS

UNV/UNICEF/Partnership/YouthVolunteer/
 Mozambique

The organisation also reviewed best practices, policies and trends with regards to youth volunteerism at global level. In line with agreed international strategies such as the UN World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY) and the UN Youth-System Wide Action Plan (SWAP), the Youth Volunteering Strategy aims to increase the inclusion and engagement of youth in peace and development fields. It states that youth volunteerism fosters empowerment since young people gain skills, self-confidence and experience. At the same time, the strategy defines young people as engaged actors and agents of change that can generate transformative impacts in the communities where they serve.

In 2013, UNV established the Youth Volunteer Programme as the implementing framework of the strategy. It then became the Youth Volunteers Global Programme under the scope of UNV's Strategic Framework (2014-2017). Aligned with the Youth Volunteering Strategy, the overall goal of the Programme is to facilitate the engagement of youth in global peace and sustainable human development through volunteerism, bringing the voice of youth into the development discourse and helping young people to realise their full social, economic and human potential. With regards to the Strategic Framework, the Youth Volunteers Global Programme relates to Outcome 1: UN entities are more effective in delivering their results by integrating high quality and well-supported UN Volunteers and volunteerism in their programmes; as well as to Outcome 2: Countries more effectively integrate volunteerism within national frameworks enabling better engagement of people in development processes.

In addition, UNV launched the UN Youth Volunteer modality in May 2014. The modality is open to young professionals from 18 to 29 years old with little or no professional experience. The UN Youth Volunteers are given the opportunity to serve for up to two years with UN agencies and they can be either nationals or internationals.



FOSTERING YOUTH VOLUNTEERISM: THE COLLABORATION BETWEEN UNV AND UNICEF IN MOZAMBIQUE

PROJECT OVERVIEW

In order to implement the Youth Volunteering Strategy and in the context of the Youth Volunteers Global Programme, UNV looked for new opportunities to integrate UN Youth Volunteers into UN agencies' programmes. Taking into consideration UNICEF's focus on youth and its mandate to advocate for the protection of children's rights, to help meet their basic needs and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential, the agency appeared as a natural fit to collaborate with on Youth Volunteering.

UNICEF agreed to pilot the UN Youth Volunteer modality and UNV and UNICEF worked together to explore the possibility of a UNV Youth group modality; recruiting and supporting the placement of a group of young people at the same time. In 2014, UNICEF Headquarters launched a call to its field offices to take part in the pilot programme. Initially, it was expected to be rolled-out in ten countries with 20 UN Youth Volunteers per country, yet UNICEF Mozambique was the first agency to agree to a two-year pilot programme with UNV (2014-2016). The pilot had three key objectives: to increase the direct participation of young people in the work of UNICEF in Mozambique, to support the development of youth volunteerism in Mozambique and to build national capacity especially with young people. Additionally, UNICEF Mozambique and UNV wanted to examine if the recruitment of youth volunteers as a group was a more effective and efficient working model than individual volunteer deployments.

A group of twelve national youth volunteers (UNYVs) was deployed, and one international youth volunteer coordinator was added to monitor and support the national volunteers. The youth coordinator arrived in September 2014 in Maputo and the national youth volunteers began their assignments in March 2015. Some national volunteers were deployed to the Programme Coordination section while others were spread across UNICEF thematic units: Protection, Education, Health and Communication, Advocacy, Participation, and Partnerships (CAPP). All volunteers were deployed to the UNICEF office in Maputo, except for two volunteers deployed to the UNICEF Protection Section who were based in Tete and Zambezia with local partner organisations (Linha Fala Criança and the Maputo Youth Justice Pilot). In May 2015, following miscommunications between UNV and UNICEF about the original intended length, both organisations decided to shorten the pilot to one year.



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PERFORMANCE

UNICEF Mozambique coordinated the pilot phase with UNV Headquarters and the UNV Mozambique field unit. Both organisations mentioned that the pilot was successful and that it met its initial objectives. Furthermore, the collaboration was perceived by the key actors as beneficial for the volunteers themselves and at the same time for UNV and UNICEF.

Aged between 18 and 29 years, the twelve young UNYVs were provided with an opportunity to contribute to, and to learn about, global peace and sustainable human development in the specific context of children's rights. They were exposed to UNICEF's core activities and they acquired a better knowledge of UNICEF's work. They were able to put into practice their knowledge and skills, as well as to build their capacities through their assignments.

At the same time, the youth volunteer modality provided an opportunity to UNICEF to strengthen its activities. The UNVs contributed to UNICEF's development initiatives by bringing to the organisation their motivation and specific skills and knowledge in various areas such as technology for development (T4D), coordination and management, communication, child protection and survival, social mobilisation for education, community health care, etc. The UNYVs provided ongoing support and follow-up on specific programmes as well as with partner organisations. Furthermore, being young people themselves, the UNVs were able to connect more easily to other young people. In the particular case of HIV and adolescent programming, they provided enriched feedback about the relevance of programming content.

The collaboration between UNV and UNICEF allowed UNV to assess the functioning of the UN Youth Volunteer modality as defined under the Strategic Framework 2014-2017. The two organisations paid specific attention to the group placement element, which consisted of recruiting and supporting the placement of a group of young people at the same time. Some strengths of the modality were identified. Both management and administration were facilitated by the group modality. For instance, the induction and training processes were done at the same time for all volunteers, which saved time and resources and facilitated the promotion of team spirit between the future youth volunteers.

Finally, through the experience, UNV increased its visibility and recognition as an effective volunteer organisation within the United Nations system. The UNV field unit in Mozambique worked together with UNICEF to train, prepare and coach the UNYVs in order to ensure that they would produce the expected results. It also collaborated with UNDP to provide the necessary management, support and operational backstopping to the volunteers.



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LESSONS LEARNED & UPSCALING

Although the pilot was considered a success, several challenges were faced during its implementation, which ranged from operational difficulties encountered by volunteers to coordination issues between UNV and UNICEF.

Operational challenges included among others, difficulties to communicate in English, issues related to payments and recruitment challenges. Through their assignments, UNYVs encountered difficulties to work in English and showed some interest in improving their level. However, the contract modality (six-months contracts renewed) and the allowance for training they received (USD 250 for six months) constituted challenges since courses in Maputo were expensive (USD 700-800).

Related to payments, two UNYVs received higher resettlement allowances by mistake. This caused some concerns among other UNYVs who were paid less. Furthermore, the international UNYV coordinator was subjected to the youth modality and as such received a VLA lower than what international UNVs usually receive. She had difficulties to meet her day-to-day basic needs, which challenged her performance as a coordinator.

The recruitment of the twelve UNYV was highly demanding for UNV Mozambique. Once in place, the UNYV coordinator was in charge of the recruitment process together with two people from UNV Field Unit. The process ranged from the development of the Terms of References to the selection and it took six months to recruit the twelve UNYVs. As a result, the international coordinator's assignment ended before the UNYVs' did. UNICEF hired the coordinator as a consultant for three months to enable her to continue her work but the group was left without a coordinator for the last three months.

Regarding the cooperation between UNV and UNICEF, challenges and delays were faced due to the lack of common tools and modalities. UNV and UNICEF have different financial and operational modalities and having diverse systems led to delays in the procurement of training materials, flight tickets and other administrative support to the UNYVs.

Based on the challenges faced, the key learnings were related to information sharing and cooperation between the two organisations. UNV and UNICEF understood the importance of putting in place shared mechanisms and tools to better plan and foster cooperation and information sharing. The stakeholders mentioned that working on having all relevant information available in one place accessible by UNV and UNICEF Mozambique could have facilitated cooperation and as a result boost the pilot efficiency.

Overall, despite the challenges, the youth volunteer pilot has set a precedent for UNICEF Mozambique to understand why including more young people as part of its team is important to reach its goals and fulfil its mandate. At the same time, it has permitted UNV to promote Youth Volunteerism and to assess the functioning of the UNV Youth group modality. The pilot also strengthened UNV's relationship with UNICEF and helped build a solid partnership. Finally, young Mozambicans have gained skills, self-confidence and experience and as a result they have contributed to increasing the country's national capacity.

Due to its success, UNICEF Mozambique and UNV are interested in scaling up the pilot and in continuing their common work in Mozambique. Furthermore, similar pilots, that count on the collaboration of UNV and UNICEF field offices, could be developed in specific countries as initially planned. On the global level, UNICEF and UNV are working on strengthening and formalising their partnership on youth volunteerism. They are currently developing the Youth Champions Programme, which aims at promoting the engagement of young people and children as agents of change.

V-FORCE IN SRI LANKA: PROMOTING VOLUNTEERISM AND INCREASING NATIONAL CAPACITY

CONTEXT

In 2014, 8.6 million Sri Lankans, amounting to around 40 % of the country's population, volunteered at least once a year. Sri Lanka has a long history of volunteerism (known as shramadana) and the concept is deeply integrated in its culture. It has historical roots of collective action and participatory decision-taking and its religious and cultural traditions foster altruism.

The initial forms of volunteerism in Sri Lanka were collectives of individuals involved in activities of the local temples (Dayaka Sabha) and village dwellers engaged in agricultural activities (Wewa Sabha). Since then, volunteer initiatives have flourished in Sri Lanka and many were set up as charities, associations and corporate structures that focus on achieving sustainable development.

The rich volunteer culture in Sri Lanka explains the long-term relationship that the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) has built with the country. Active in Sri Lanka since 1974, UNV has worked with various stakeholders including government bodies, UN agencies and civil society in order to foster volunteerism as a way for Sri Lanka to achieve peace and development goals.

One of UNV's areas of work is the support of policy development and legislation recognising volunteer work. In 2014 for instance, UNV Sri Lanka, in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Ministry of Social Empowerment and Welfare, established the first National Volunteering Secretariat to encourage existing volunteering initiatives to flourish while helping new ones emerge.

UNV also works to enable citizens to be agents of change in their communities and to increase individual and community resilience especially towards disasters and climate change. After the 2004 tsunami, UNV supported the Government of Sri Lanka by mobilising 104 United Nations Volunteers (UNVs) who played a crucial role in coordinating emergency relief and reconstruction initiatives. Similarly, as a part of the UNDP Climate Change Adaptation Project, UNV Sri Lanka currently works together with the Ministry of Disaster Management and UNDP to implement a Disaster Risk Reduction Project.

Finally, UNV promotes youth engagement and empowerment in Sri Lanka through volunteerism. According to the research report produced by UNV in 2014, "Sri Lankan Youth: Volunteering to Make a Difference", 74% of young volunteers believe that volunteering immensely contributes to the development of Sri Lanka and 86% of young volunteers believe that volunteering should be a part of schools or university curricula.



KEY WORDS

UNV/ Sri Lanka/ Capacity building/ Community engagement/ Partnerships

V-FORCE IN SRI LANKA: PROMOTING VOLUNTEERISM AND INCREASING NATIONAL CAPACITY

OVERVIEW

Given the volunteerism context in Sri Lanka, UNV established a new platform for volunteerism in 2011: the Volunteer Task Force (V-Force). Initiated as a part of the tenth anniversary celebrations of the International Year of Volunteers (IYV+10), V-Force was designed to give the opportunity to Sri Lankan youth and volunteers to engage with the UN agencies and to develop their volunteer experience. At the same time, the idea was to increase Sri Lanka's national capacity by mobilising volunteers in development and peace building programmes.

When the initiative started, UNV Sri Lanka developed a specific modality for V-Force volunteers, which means that they are not UNVs but local volunteers. The management system of V-Force was designed to be simple and user friendly in order to foster engagement and facilitate mobilisation of volunteers. Citizens who wish to bring in their skills and participate in development programmes can register online to be part of a volunteer database. Once there is a request issued by UN agencies, the UNV team shares it with the V-Force database and potential volunteers can express their interest and register their response through an online form. V-Force started with a small group of 10 individuals and now the database has over 8,000 registered members.

Through V-Force, UNV Sri Lanka developed strong relationships with UN agencies since volunteers were always mobilised with a UN agency or in the framework of a UN supported project or initiative. At the same time, UNV Sri Lanka built partnerships with many organisations from private and public sectors in order to maximise V-Force impact. Partners include Cisco, the British Council in Sri Lanka, Amāna Takaful Insurance, the University of Colombo and Eastern University, all of which share the willingness to foster volunteerism as an opportunity for Sri Lankans, especially for young people. Setting common goals, the partnerships are beneficial for all stakeholders involved.

According to a feasibility study undertaken by UNV in 2017, most V-Force volunteers are young people or fresh graduates who perform different types of services. Event coordination and support is one of the services most in demand. V-Force volunteers have supported a number of UN events including the World Conference on Youth, Twinning Schools Project, V-Awards, International Youth Day, International Volunteer Day, UN Day and OPA Conference. ICT is another service line where volunteers are often deployed with 10% of the requests relating to website management, database development and other ICT-related tasks. Finally, data gathering and analysis is an area that has been receiving attention from UN Agencies in the past years.



V-FORCE IN SRI LANKA: PROMOTING VOLUNTEERISM AND INCREASING NATIONAL CAPACITY

PERFORMANCE

Each year, over 1,000 V-Force volunteers are mobilised to support UN entities, and key actors perceive them as highly beneficial for UN agencies, national stakeholders and UNV.

V-Force volunteers are given an opportunity to contribute to and to learn about global peace and sustainable human development. According to the feasibility study, over 50 % of registered volunteers believe that volunteering enables them to know more about the UN and its activities in Sri Lanka. At the same time, V-Force volunteers can put into practice their knowledge and skills, as well as to build their capacities through their assignments. Some 90% of registered members feel that V-Force allows them to further develop their knowledge and skills.

As volunteers are usually highly satisfied with their experience, volunteerism is a win-win concept and UN agencies also benefit from including V-Force volunteers in their activities. Volunteers increase UN agencies' capacities since they support their work in diverse areas such as project coordination, management, teamwork and effective communication. They also bring in their knowledge of the Sri Lankan context and thus often serve as agents of change in the communities where they work. In that sense, V-Force is a key resource for enabling community level engagement and it allows UN agencies to localise the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Apart from being highly beneficial for both volunteers and UN agencies, V-Force is a platform that allows UNV to increase volunteer engagement and mobilisation in Sri Lanka. Through the platform, UNV has the possibility of quickly mobilising and deploying many local volunteers to UN Agencies and thus to build effective partnerships with them. In terms of modalities, V-Force and the regular UNV modalities complement each other since national UNVs are usually recruited as coordinators of V-Force volunteers. V-Force is conceived as a national roster for UNV with V-Force volunteers gaining through their experiences an initial understanding of how the UN works and in time it constitutes an extensive pool of potential UNVs.



V-FORCE IN SRI LANKA: PROMOTING VOLUNTEERISM AND INCREASING NATIONAL CAPACITY

LESSONS LEARNED & UPSCALING

Although V-Force is considered a successful initiative, several challenges were faced during its implementation, which were all related to the management and the sustainability of the initiative.

One of the main challenges faced by UNV was related to the lack of human resources needed to run the platform. Since the inception of the platform, the UNV field unit (FU) has been managing V-Force volunteers and the team has encountered difficulties to cope with the amount of work needed to run the initiative. In order to face this challenge, the UNV field unit recommended in its feasibility study to have three national UN Volunteers dedicated to V-Force.

Another important challenge was that the management process was not automated. Citizens registered to the database using a Google form and then the team would send the Terms of Reference of each request from UN agencies to all members of the database. Having reached 8,000 members, the team concluded that it needed to move towards a more formalised process. Building on the global partnership between UNV and Cisco, UNV Sri Lanka strengthened its relationship with the company by mobilising their students as V-Force volunteers. Since June 2017, nine V-Force Cisco volunteers have been mobilised to develop the new V-Force online portal, which will include the different phases of the management process from registration to deployment.

The general lack of financial resources has also been difficult to overcome. Since the beginning of the initiative, V-Force has been managed by the FU with no or minimal financial resources allocated to the initiative. Furthermore, UN host agencies do not provide financial support although they can be required to provide food, accommodation and transport to the V-Force volunteers when required by the activity. According to the feasibility study, UNV Sri Lanka decided to look at new ways to sustain the V-Force model.

Overall, despite the challenges, the V-Force initiative has allowed UNV Sri Lanka to promote volunteerism as a way for Sri Lanka to achieve the SDGs. UNV is currently looking at ways to institutionalise the initiative with proper human and financial resources allocated in order to ensure its sustainability.

Although UNV's Strategic Framework (2014-2017) implementation did not have an impact at operational level since the initiative was already in place, V-Force is aligned with the strategic priorities and the defined outcomes. The platform and its success made the case for the integration of the concept of volunteerism in national frameworks (Outcome 2 of Strategic Framework). At the same time, it has permitted UN agencies to be more effective by involving young volunteers in their programmes (Outcome 1 of Strategic Framework). Furthermore, through V-Force, Sri Lankans, especially young people have gained skills, self-confidence and experience; served as agents of change in the communities where they worked, and as a result contributed to increase the country's national capacity (Outcome 2 of Strategic Framework). Finally, the initiative is aligned with two priorities of the Strategic Framework: Youth (Youth Volunteers Global Programme), and Volunteer Infrastructure (Volunteer Infrastructure Global Programme).

Due to the success of V-Force, UNV Sri Lanka is interested in institutionalising the initiative in order to ensure its sustainability and to maximise its potential. Furthermore, some countries such as Egypt, Bangladesh, Nepal, India and Bolivia have shown interest in replicating the initiative and adapting it to their local context.

UN VOLUNTEERS IN UN PEACE KEEPING MISSIONS

CONTEXT

The collaboration between UNV and the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) started in Cambodia in the 1990s, when UN Volunteers were deployed to serve as civilian staff for the national electoral process at the United Nations Transitional Authority (UNTAC, February 1992-September 1993). Following this first collaboration, in which more than 400 volunteers from over 60 different countries were involved in the UN Mission work, UNV became an essential support to UN Missions worldwide. In 2003, UNV and DPKO/DFS formalised their collaboration through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the purpose of defining the operational framework, basic rights, status and obligations for both organisations. Furthermore, the MOU established a model of Exchange of Letters (EOL) to set the basis for particular collaborations in the different UN Missions in order to reflect specific contexts of operations. The MOU was reviewed several times in 2007 and it was amended for the first time in 2008 along with the UNV recruitment rules, and for a second time in 2009 with reference to DSA payments for in-mission travel.

A joint evaluation of the collaboration between UNV and DPKO/DFS was carried out in 2011 to provide a response to the UNGA resolution 60/266 in which the Secretary General requested a strengthening of the coordination between DPKO/ DFS and UNV for the use of UN Volunteers and the evaluation of their contribution to peacekeeping operations. The evaluation concluded that the partnership had been very successful in meeting DPKO/DFS objectives in a number of countries and emphasised the rapid engagement of highly skilled and motivated volunteers. According to this evaluation, the partnership also made progress in the promotion of volunteerism and the development of national capacities, although this remained a work in progress, particularly in achieving outcome-level results in communities. The evaluation identified challenges related to mission planning, stakeholder communication, and reporting on results. It also recommended to update the MOU between UNV and DPKO/DFS, and to strengthen their partnership. Until today, although UNV and DPKO/DFS recognise the need to reformulate the MOU, this has not happened yet.



KEY WORDS

UNV, DPKO, DFS, DPA, UN Peace Keeping Missions, flexibility, rapid deployment, motivation, cost-effectiveness, high professionalism, strengthen national capacities, South-South Cooperation.

UN VOLUNTEERS IN UN PEACE KEEPING MISSIONS

OVERVIEW

The work provided by UN Volunteers in UN Missions contributes to Outcome 1 of the UNV Strategic Framework 2014-2017 in which UNV assists UN entities in delivering their results by integrating high quality and well supported UN Volunteers and volunteerism in their programmes. DPKO/DPA is one of the most important clients for UNV, as they mobilise the largest numbers of volunteers: 37% of all UN Volunteers were deployed in Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding Missions during 2014-2017.

Depending on the number of UN Volunteers in a particular UN Mission, and the complexity and size of the operation, a UNV Field Unit (FU) is integrated within the Mission staffing and budget. The UNV FU is responsible for the mobilisation and management of UN Volunteer assignments, strategic advice to mission management to optimise the use of UN Volunteer modalities in achieving the Mission mandate, and advocacy around the role of volunteers and volunteerism in the country. The UNV FU in a UN Mission usually consists of a UNV Programme Manager (PM) at P3/P4 level, international UN Volunteers (Support Officers) and national staff at G4/G5 level. All the UNV FU personnel are integrated within the mission staffing table. In case there is no UNV FU in the Mission, the volunteer management and support to the UN Volunteers is provided by the Office of the Head of Administration of the Mission.

Today, UN Volunteers serve in five Special Political Missions (SPMs/DPA) and eleven Peacekeeping Missions (DPKO). The UNMISS (South Sudan), MONUSCO (DR Congo), and MINUSCA (Central African Republic) Missions are the ones that have mobilised the majority of the UN Volunteers. However, the number of UN Volunteers in UN Missions has declined 8.4% overall since 2014 (from 2,346 volunteers mobilised in 2014 to 2,148 in 2016) due to the downsizing or closure of Missions and also due to revised structures of new UN operations which focus more on national capacity development and lighter footprints in the country of operation. This is also in part due to the changed approach to UN-supported elections: some countries have passed from territory-wide observation to capacity development of National Elections Commissions, which requires less manpower.

Most of the UN Volunteers that serve in UN Missions are international. Although the mobilisation of national UN Volunteers has increased since 2014, it still represents a small percentage. In 2014, 0.4% of the total volunteers mobilised in the Missions were nationals, while in 2017 this percentage has increased to 6%. One of the major reasons for international UNV deployment with UN Missions is a lack of capacity at local level, which can be a hindrance to achieving the mandate of the Mission. In addition to providing the required substantive, administrative and technical support to the Mission, the UN Volunteers play a crucial role in developing local civilian capacities. With the emphasis on UN Missions to develop national capacities, they are now looking at mobilising national UN Volunteers and pairing them with international volunteers that have a dedicated focus on national capacity development. An advantage of this is that national UN Volunteers can often connect better with the local communities. Examples of Missions with increased numbers of national UN Volunteers are MINUSCA, with 55 national UN Volunteers included in the 2016/2017 budget for the Mission Support Division (MSD), and other UN Peacekeeping Missions that have incorporated national UN Volunteers are UNAMID, MONUSCO and UNMIL.

Further to this, 86% of the UN Volunteers working in the UN Missions are from the global South, which indicates that most of the internationals that work as UN Volunteers in UN Peacekeeping Missions are facilitating South-South cooperation. Although UNV has increased the percentage of female UN Volunteer candidates proposed to UN entities during the last years, the percentage of females in UN Missions has remained steady from 2014-2017 and represents 31% of all volunteers deployed in Missions. In most of these Missions, it is challenging to mobilise women because some technical professions are still predominantly occupied by men, for example, in the areas of engineering and aviation. At the same time, the majority of assignments are located in non-family duty stations, which can constitute a challenge to the efforts to recruit women.

UN VOLUNTEERS IN UN PEACE KEEPING MISSIONS

PERFORMANCE

The technical capacity and motivation of UN Volunteers as well as the speed of deployment and their cost effectiveness are considered to be the most important reasons for recruitment of UN Volunteers in the UN Missions. The inclusion of UN Volunteers has helped to bring new knowledge to support specific activities and tasks, and the UN Volunteers are valued for coming with a fresh mind and bringing in new ideas to the Missions.

Overall, UN Volunteers are recognised by DPKO/DFS as being a resource for the Missions that enable them to build national and local capacities, engage with civil society and grassroots organisations, and to provide community-based action. UN Volunteers also have the advantage of being perceived as politically and socially neutral actors and thus non-threatening to stakeholders. National and international volunteers have complementary roles in the Missions. While national UN Volunteers are often more accepted in their communities and contribute to sustainability, internationals are in a better position to safeguard neutrality and uphold principles of impartiality.

Although UNV's flexibility in the recruitment and deployment process is being considered as a benefit, UN Missions perceive that UNV has become more bureaucratic over the past years. According to UNV personnel and Missions, some years ago the recruitment, deployment and reassignment processes were much easier and quicker. Furthermore, due to the revised conditions of service, volunteers can only serve for four years whereas before they could serve for eight years. While the maximum assignment period was shortened to protect UN Volunteers, this has limited the UN Mission's ability to retain them.

Another challenge is related to the participation of UNV in the volunteer forecasting for the Missions. While UN Missions usually adequately anticipate the number of volunteers, and staffing tables are considered a good mechanism for calculating accurate forecasts of the numbers of UN Volunteers to be selected and mobilised, UNV does not participate in the decision-making process and therefore cannot receive real time information on possible forecasts. As a result, UNV has identified the need to participate in the forecast of assignments for business predictability and has requested DPKO/DFS to include UNV Programme Managers at the Missions during budget formulation and the drafting of staffing tables.

Volunteers are deployed to work in diverse areas, and often they are considered to be the front-runners of the Missions. Regarding UN Volunteers' experience, when the UN Missions have a UNV FU, UN Volunteers are usually better informed and supported. In Missions without a UNV FU, in some cases UN Volunteers are sent to the field without basic induction training, or without clarity of their work assignment. These issues need to be addressed by the Mission, and UNV's HQ in Bonn normally has quite a limited capacity to ensure that these aspects are covered.

UN Volunteers that have served in UN Missions constitute a pool of highly qualified professionals that are able to serve in similar contexts after the end of the assignments. However, according to the break-in-service rule about the eligibility of UN Volunteers for mission appointments and outlined in the administrative instruction ST/AI/2016/1 on recruitment, the UN Volunteers, in case of resignation or recruitment in the same Mission, are required to take a break of six months before joining the Mission appointment. This can lead to a missed opportunity for the UN system, as former UN Volunteers look for other job opportunities during the ending period of their assignments. Therefore, UNV has proposed and agreed with DPKO/DFS to revise this rule, but the process is not finalised yet.



UN VOLUNTEERS IN UN PEACE KEEPING MISSIONS

Programme Managers that have been allocated in Missions directly report to the Director or Chief of the Mission Support (DMS/CMS) who manages the personnel or human resources section of the Mission. They do not directly report to the Resident Coordinator who leads the UNCT, which limits UNV's positioning as a programmatic and implementing partner. However, with the programmatic approach introduced by UNV's Strategic Framework 2014-2017, UNV personnel at UN Missions have initiated new projects in coordination with governments and other UN agencies. For example, in Côte d'Ivoire, the UNV Programme Manager of the Mission and the Programme Officer of UNV's FU have taken advantage of UNV's presence in the country and in June 2017 launched a project to develop a national volunteer scheme co-shared with UNDP, the Ministry of Youth and other government institutions. This initiative has contributed to positioning UNV as a programmatic partner in the country, to building national capacity and transferring knowledge whilst also serving as an opportunity to maintain UNV's presence in the country once the Mission finishes.

LESSONS LEARNED & UPSCALING

UNV's support provided to the UN Missions shows that flexible mechanisms, rapid deployment, as well as the motivation, cost-effectiveness and high professionalism of UN Volunteers are the most important aspects to be maintained in order to keep or increase the numbers of UN Volunteers mobilised in the UN Missions.

The increasing interest of recruiting national volunteers for the Missions also demonstrates that nationals constitute an added value in Peacebuilding Missions where it is necessary to strengthen national capacities, facilitate knowledge and skills transfer, and where it is also necessary to bring local community members closer to the Mission.

Considering the declining numbers of UN Volunteers in the Missions, it is crucial for UNV to improve its business, which requires reducing bureaucracy, improving its response to UN Missions' needs and ensuring adequate support to the UN Volunteers in their induction and training processes. Additionally, UNV needs to play a more active role in the volunteer forecast for the UN Missions in order to adequately plan numbers.

The experience of the partnership with DPKO/DFS also demonstrates that MOUs need to be frequently adapted according to new circumstances and changes produced by external factors that might limit the achievement of results.

Finally, UNV's programmatic approach constitutes an opportunity to position UNV as a programmatic partner in countries where UN Missions are established and UN Volunteers are deployed. It also contributes to maintaining UNV's presence in countries where UN Missions are closing or the numbers of volunteers mobilised are decreasing.