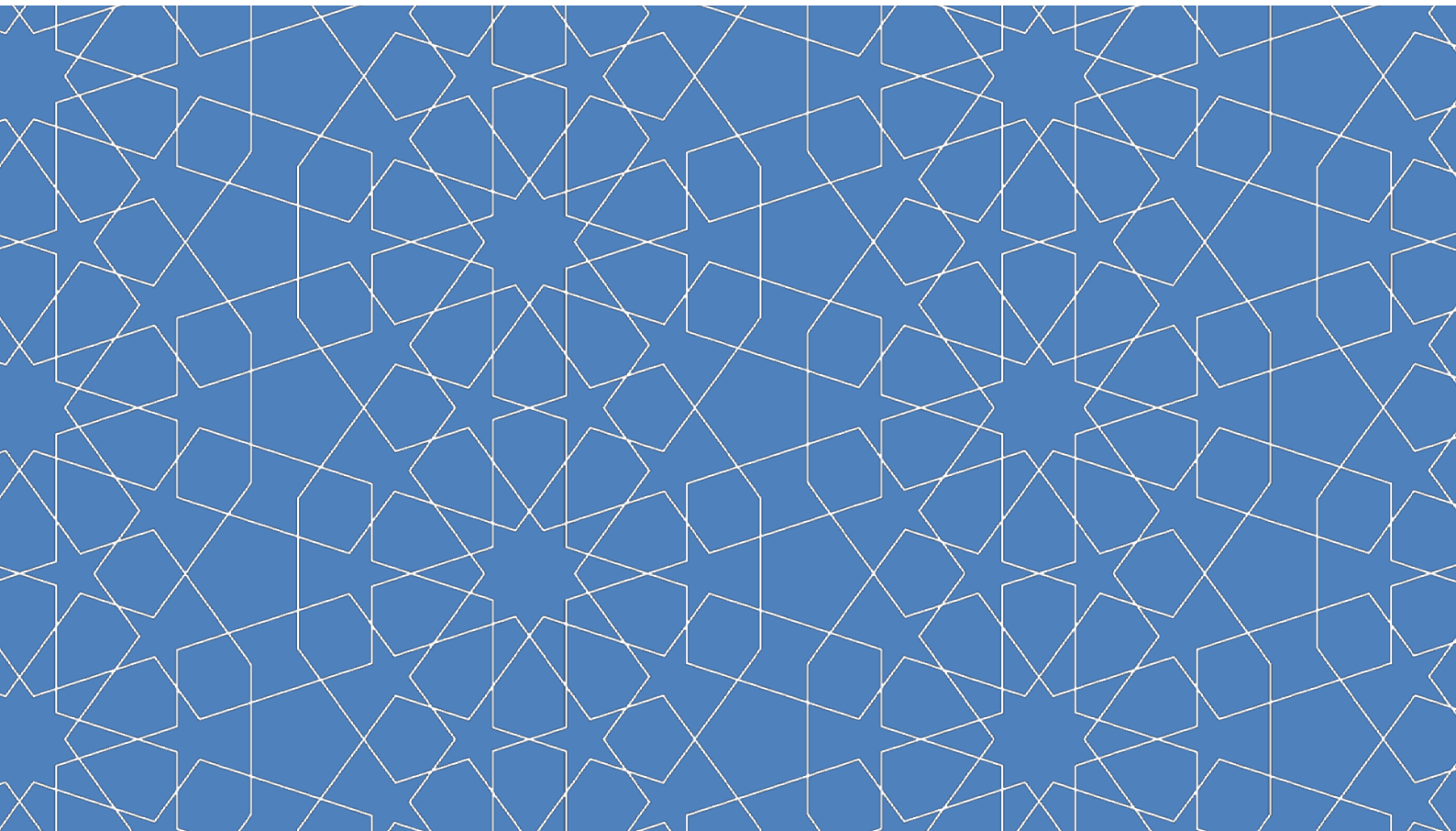




MID-TERM EVALUATION
JUNE 2015

Arab Youth Volunteering for a Better Future





UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTEERS (UNV)
REGIONAL PROGRAMME
EGYPT, YEMEN, JORDAN, TUNISIA AND MOROCCO

‘Arab Youth Volunteering for a Better Future’

MID-TERM EVALUATION
JUNE 2015

Valentina Sommacal, Team Leader - JUST Associate
Stefania Chirizzi, Technical Advisor - JUST Founding Member
Barbara Lilliu, Technical Advisor - JUST Founding Member

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I. List of acronyms and abbreviations

AFVA	Arab Federation for Voluntary Activities
AYV4BF	Arab Youth Volunteering for a Better Future
BL	Barbara Lilliu
BMZ	Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
GOV.	Government
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
HQs	Headquarters
HRBA	Human Rights Based Approach
IOM	International Organization for Migration
KAFD	King Abdallah Fund for Development
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MBC	Middle-East Broadcasting Center
MTE	Mid-Term Evaluation
NAC	National Advisory Committee
NYDS	National Youth Development Specialist
PO	Program Officer
RBM	Result- Based Management
RCC	Regional Center Cairo
SC	Stefania Chirizzi
SWOT	Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats
TOT	Training of Trainers
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
VM	Volunteers' Management
VIOs	Volunteers-involving organizations
VS	Valentina Sommacal

II. Executive Summary

The Mid-Term Evaluation of the Regional Programme 'Arab Youth Volunteering for a Better Future' covers the period from 2012 through to the end of 2014. Relevant findings draw directly on remote and face-to-face interviews held with 71 respondents in the 5 target countries (Egypt, Yemen, Jordan, Tunisia and Morocco), in addition to Lebanon, Bahrain and HQs. They include officers of UNV, UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, and IOM, as well as officers of other international development organizations, representatives of national government counterparts, civil society organizations, and volunteering youth.

The Programme strategy, which is centred on four levels of interventions (awareness of the role of volunteerism in socio-economic development, institutional frameworks, capacity building for CSOs, and formal structures for youth inclusion), proved relevant and valuable to the five countries. This indicates that the strategy, as elaborated during the national consultations held in 2012, is appropriate and to the point, as it tackles those elements which are critical to the promotion of youth volunteering.

The implementation performance over the last two years showed that the programme strategy is more likely to be viable in countries that are oriented towards economic growth, relatively politically stable, not affected by prolonged armed conflicts or civil wars, and whose national policies support civil society and youth. It also highlighted the importance of adopting a tailored approach to each country's specific needs and contexts, hence concentrating on those components which are more likely to bring tangible results over a shorter time-span.

This leading initiative has enabled exploration of the youth volunteering landscape in the five countries, and identification of strategies for further support. Though the effects will be more visible in the long-term, it is already evident that the project has contributed to raising UNV's profile at the national level among civil society stakeholders, government and international development agencies. Networking at field and regional levels has enabled UNV to position itself as the reference organization for the promotion of youth volunteering in the target countries.

Exchanges with youth volunteers, as part of the evaluation process, showed that the project has helped equip them with key conceptual and methodological tools for performing voluntary work with a development-oriented approach. This suggests that the project has facilitated youth empowerment through volunteerism, and indicates its potential to reach and impact a larger number of youth, thereby promoting wider inclusion.

The project has also progressed into implementing national and regional workplans, on the basis of available human and financial resources, and has successfully created links with other development actors, such as the British Council and other UN agencies

(UNESCO, UNFPA), in an endeavour to integrate strategies and enhance relevant activities. The availability of process-based indicators demonstrate the actual accomplishment of activities and their scope but challenged the objective measuring of the project outcomes. The qualitative analysis performed during the evaluation sought to provide an indication in that sense, as illustrated below.

(Output 1) Awareness campaigns were effectively implemented in five countries, and the project has improved the visibility of UNV among CSOs and volunteering youth, particularly in urban areas. The Regional Forum on Youth Volunteering (Morocco 2014) represented a valuable networking experience. Considering the mobility challenges of CSOs and their demand for continued regional networking, the initiative may be furthered on a virtual level through the creation of a dedicated networking and knowledge-sharing web platform, providing CSOs in the Arab region and beyond with immediate access to contacts, resources and learning materials.

(Output 2) The project has stimulated debate on the opportunity to formalize and regulate the volunteering sector, to formally recognize relevant youth endeavours, and to certify acquired experience in light of employability. Capacity needs assessments, along with inclusive debates and legal studies, were produced (Morocco, Tunisia, Jordan) to inform relevant policies, and a thorough capacity building programme in volunteer management was organized for relevant government units (Egypt). Despite government reshuffles, there was still demand for UNV's continued collaboration and technical assistance at institutional level to pursue the policy debate. This highlighted the efforts exerted by the field units to maintain and reinstate contacts with government counterparts, as was feasible.

(Output 3) Capacity building on volunteer management proved particularly valuable. Involved CSOs were highly receptive, with training replications reaching up to 257 people in 2014. There was demand for increased capacity building of CSOs in fundraising, project management, monitoring and evaluation, and institution building.

(Output 4) Despite being one-off events, leadership camps proved highly valuable, highlighting an opportunity to integrate life skills¹ on a wider scale. The assignment of national UNVs at local CSOs proved successful as a strategy for promoting UNV's approach to volunteering for development while building relevant expertise at CSO level.

Notably, the project was able to operate according to a reduced budget, whilst contributing towards project objectives. Available financial resources were re-allocated in a timely manner to respond to project needs, and the budget was carefully managed. Staff turnover and political instability (Egypt, Yemen) have represented the main factors challenging the timely implementation of the programme.

Building on the positive results achieved so far, and in an attempt to respond to local counterparts' demand for continued support, a second phase of the project (3 years),

¹ "Life skills" are defined as psychosocial abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. They are loosely grouped into three broad categories of skills: cognitive skills for analyzing and using information, personal skills for developing personal agency and managing oneself, and inter-personal skills for communicating and interacting effectively with others (UNICEF).

VIII

with re-programming at national level, may be considered, in light of consolidation and sustainability. Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt and Jordan have equal potential as recipients of a second phase. In such a case, new management arrangements and a new staff scheme would be considered in line with the recommendations of this report. Though the conflict affecting Yemen prevents the continuation of country based activities, it would still be important to explore whether the outcomes of the intervention have contributed to fostering coping strategies for the current situation.

In an attempt to respond to the needs identified as part of the evaluation exercise, future interventions shall focus on outreach to, and inclusion of, marginalized youth and youth living in remote areas, with a focus on gender. To this aim, the strengthening of legislative frameworks to ensure volunteers' protection shall be pursued. The aim would be to inspire youth through volunteering, and to contribute to realizing their potential as active agents of change and development in their communities.

Drawing on best practices of the current phase, the project may pursue awareness campaigns with a focus on social networks and regional/national volunteering awards to further recognize volunteering youth and attach social value. Sensitization campaigns may also target youth below 18, possibly in cooperation with schools, in order to promote the value of volunteerism from an early age.

Thorough work on youth mobilization could be implemented at the grassroots, followed by promoting life skills (with a focus on leadership, communications, negotiation) through a dedicated training programme aimed at inspiring youth to explore their own potentials, therefore preparing them for involvement in youth-led innovation-driven development. The above development actions shall be geared toward employability, civic engagement, women's empowerment (reproductive health and entrepreneurship), and education. UNV's added value would be at the mobilization level, based on its ability to work closely with volunteer-involving organizations, particularly those engaging youth, thus enhancing the efforts of those UN and development organizations already engaged in such interventions.

The above endeavour shall be designed in full collaboration with a pool/network of selected partner CSOs, UN agencies (UNDP) and local government authorities (e.g. youth centres) who may be in charge of field implementation, under UNV/UNDP coordination. In parallel with this, capacity building for local CSOs shall be continued, focusing on institution building, fundraising, project management, and M&E. Follow-up and technical support for government counterparts shall also be continued to promote legal and institutional frameworks fostering youth volunteerism.

A second phase will count on a thorough resource mobilization, private sector engagement and a sustainability strategy, to be developed over the course of implementation, with a possibility of exploring fundraising opportunities among GCC donor countries. It will depend on a reinforced M&E strategy operated through a designed management information system to systematize data flow from field units to HQs. Baseline data will be collected through a survey and will be regularly updated and assessed to substantiate results and verify impact.

The project could rely on reinforced management structures at field level (including one experienced UNV national project manager and one project assistant), referring directly to higher management and technical staff based at HQs. Staff retention strategies, such as creating more attractive positions with incentives at monetary and career development level, will also be devised to prevent turnover of staff, further valorising existing resources as is feasible. The deployment of national UNVs at CSOs would be key to favouring and monitoring implementation of the project at the grassroots. National Advisory Committees could be downscaled in terms of the number of members and assigned more responsibility at decision making level, assuming the role of ‘steering committees’.

At institutional level, the project will continue to operate in partnership with key UN agencies and development actors at international, local and regional levels, identifying new possible collaborations, such as with the Arab Federation for Voluntary Activities. The extent to which a second phase can be conceived, designed, implemented and evaluated in full partnership and consultation with UNDP, national government and CSOs will determine the degree of ownership and further integration of the project within national and UN strategies at country level, thereby fostering ownership and sustainability.



National volunteers and UNV NYDS taking part in group activities in Morocco with evaluation team leader

III. Acknowledgements

The Evaluation Team gratefully acknowledges the support of the Evaluation Reference Group and of the Programme Regional Team for their support throughout the Mid-Term Evaluation, in particular Ms Gelfiya Schienko, Chief of Results Management Support Section, Mr Ibrahim Hussein, UNV Arab States Portfolio Manager, Ms Kawtar Zerouali, Programme Manager, Mr Hendrik Smid, Programme Analyst, Mr Robert Toé, Youth Programme Specialist, and Ms Stephanie Laryea, Regional Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist. A word of thanks goes to the other UNV and UN officers who participated in the evaluation exercise, particularly Ms Rosemary Kalapurakal, Deputy Executive Coordinator, Mr Geoffrey Prewitt, Chief of Development Programming, Mr Francesco Galtieri, Chief of Peace Programming Section, Ms Karen Förnzler, Partnerships Development Specialist, Mr Sasha Ramirez, Communications Specialist, Mr Waheeb Al-Eryani, Programme Management Specialist, Ms Elise Bouvet, Online Volunteering Programme Specialist, Ms Daniela Bosioc, Field Unit Capacity Development Specialist, Ms Regine Meisters-Porcel, Portfolio Associate, Arab States, Ms Ayshanie Medagangoda-Labe, UNDP Deputy Coordinator in Morocco and, from UN New York, Mr Ahmad Alhendawi, UN Special Envoy on Youth.

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A special word of thanks goes to all the project stakeholders and beneficiaries at government and CSO level who took part in the evaluation exercise and offered to share their valuable views and experience on the programme, either remotely or in person.

Most importantly, we would like to thank all the youth volunteers involved in the

Object of the Evaluation

evaluation for their insightful contributions to the debate. Indeed, the motivation, commitment and enthusiasm they displayed are a clear promise for a better future.

The Arab Youth Volunteering for a Better Future (AYV4BF) is a regional programme, launched in 2011 by the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) to harness the power and energy of youth through volunteerism, drawing on the core values of self-help, solidarity and social cohesion.

The programme was devised in response to the recent political and social changes in the Arab Region and is based on a series of regional and national youth-led participatory consultation workshops held during the course of 2012 in Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia and Yemen. The above consultations outlined key needs and aspirations of Arab youth and informed the design of relevant programme documents. The programme, implemented in Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia and Yemen, builds on relevant national strategies and UNDAF outcomes, is part of the UNV Strategic Framework (2014-2017), and is in line with the strategies developed by the UN Development Group, UNDP and the UN Secretary General's Five Year Action Plan.

The three-year pilot programme (2012-2015), endorsed in April 2013, and funded by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), aims at strengthening the infrastructure necessary to build the skills and capacities of youth in the region, thereby enhancing their social inclusion and active participation in the socio-economic development of their countries through volunteerism. The main project beneficiaries are youth, CSOs, and institutional stakeholders, namely the participating governments who are key partners in the intervention, as well as the universities and the volunteering associations².

The programme outcome is to empower youth in the Arab region through volunteer engagement. The AYV4BF theory of change considers that if awareness of the role of volunteerism in socio-economic development and participatory governance is increased (output 1); if institutional frameworks for volunteerism in the target countries and the region are strengthened (output 2); if capacity of youth organizations and CSOs to promote youth volunteering is enhanced (output 3); and if formal structures for youth inclusion through volunteering are strengthened (output 4), then youth in the Arab region will be empowered through volunteer engagement and able to meaningfully contribute to socio-economic development. The evaluation matrix attached as Annex I includes the project

² In this evaluation, the term beneficiary refers to the government counterparts, the involved CSOs and volunteering youth. Stakeholders include beneficiaries as well as all those actors who were involved in the project playing an active role, they include, inter alia, project partners, UNDP and other UN and international development agencies.

results framework.

The project has focused on the areas of partnership, capacity development and networking, and tries to integrate a gender-sensitive and inclusive approach. During the course of the first two years of implementation, the programme has helped sensitize, mobilize and train youth volunteers, institutional stakeholders and civil society organizations across the Arab region. To achieve the above, the action has been operating according to annual work plans (2013, 2014 and 2015) devising a number of activities planned at regional and national level as identified with the field units, approved by the National Advisory Committees and based on specific needs, relevant opportunities and available resources.

The project's organizational structure ensures a consultative and inclusive approach. The Project Board includes Senior Beneficiaries, the Executive, and Senior Suppliers, and operates according to a quality assurance system. The programme is managed by the regional team based at UNDP Regional Centre in Cairo, which works in close coordination with relevant UNV Officers at Headquarter level, and with field units in Morocco, Tunisia, Jordan, Yemen and Egypt. It includes the National Youth Development Specialist (NYDS) and UNV Programme Officer (PO). All team members, except the programme manager, are national and international volunteers, and all national volunteers are under 30.

The budget designed for the programme accounts for USD 5.545.073. The actual funds raised for the programme account for 1.865.370,12 USD. Since 2012, the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) has contributed towards financing the programme, having covered the national consultations phase in 2012 and implementation activities over the course of 2013, 2014 and the current phase. The total contribution of BMZ accounts for 1.000.000 Euros (Special Voluntary Fund SVF and UNV cost sharing contribution). Other sources of funding include UNDP UNV Special Voluntary Fund. The Government of Belgium also contributed to the SVF with the amount of 150.000 USD. Funding spent over the years 2012, 2013 and 2014 account to USD 1.437.259, 43 representing 77% of the total budget. The budget allocated for 2015 accounts to USD 423.061,2.

Evaluation Purpose, Objective and Scope

As per the evaluation ToRs, the general objective of the MTE serves the dual objectives of learning and accountability, assessing the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, effects and sustainability of the project. The specific objectives of the MTE are: (i) To provide recommendations to improve the design and performance of the implementation of the Regional Project; (ii) To provide recommendations to inform future UNV programming at regional and country levels; (iii) To generate knowledge on good practices and lessons learned.

With the programme being a leading initiative, and considering the complex political and socio-economic situation in the region, there is a need to learn about the present significance of youth volunteerism, the way it evolves and takes shape across the target countries and, most of all, its real contribution to development. Notwithstanding the above, the overall purpose of the MTE is to assess the extent to which the programme is contributing to youth empowerment and inclusion through volunteerism and the contribution of these youth to socio-economic development. The evaluation therefore has a broad scope, encompassing outcomes and the extent to which the programme, soft assistance, partners' initiatives and cooperation among partners are contributing to its achievement. It aims to support UNV to increase the effectiveness of development through volunteerism, to assist decision-making and policy making, and to re-direct and systematize viable approaches to sustainable development.

The scope of the MTE is the regional and country-based implementation of the programme from the implementation starting date, April 2012, to mid-term/end December 2014. The Chief of the Results Management Support Section is the Commissioner of the MTE, whilst the Programme Manager of the Arab Youth Volunteering for a Better Future provides overall management and coordination of the MTE. The Commissioner provides clear advice to the evaluator at the onset on how the findings will be used and maintains the independence of the exercise. The primary audiences for the MTE are UNV Headquarters concerned units, the project board and the project team, as they are responsible for changes to project design and implementation. The secondary audiences are the national advisory committees in each country, which will use the findings in their advisory roles, as well as the UNV Global Youth Programme and other UNV HQ staff, who will feed the findings into the global synthesis report of ongoing global programmes and projects to contribute to broader UNV programming.

The rationale of the evaluation approach is encompassed in the evaluation matrix, attached to this document as Annex I, which includes reference to the selected evaluation criteria, criteria explanation and evaluation questions, in accordance with the evaluation ToRs. The evaluation is compliant with the UNDP Evaluation policy, the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) norms and standards for evaluation, as well as ethical guidelines and UN code of conduct.

3

Evaluation Methodology

With a view to enhancing learning and accountability, the evaluation adopted a participatory and consultative approach throughout all its phases, benefiting from the support of the Reference Group and the Programme M&E Specialist who provided regular weekly updates, ad hoc support, technical exchanges and feedback at each stage. This facilitated constructive and inclusive reflection about programme performance and its future prospects, involving many UNV officers directly and indirectly concerned with the initiative.

The evaluation exercise was structured into three phases: a) data gathering; b) data elaboration; c) synthesis and presentation. A detailed overview of the methodology is included in the MTE Inception Report, herewith attached as Annex VII.

The data gathering phase involved the desk review of background documentation (project documents, country-based policies, UNV strategic documents, progress reports, work plans, monitoring logs and technical outputs). A detailed list of reviewed documents is attached as Annex II. The evaluation was based on quantitative and predominantly qualitative information. Existing programme records (official programme data as relevant to output and outcome indicators) were the source of quantitative data. The availability of process-based indicators allowed to merely verify the actual accomplishment of planned activities and to consider the number of involved people, however it could not allow to measure the extent to which expected results were actually being achieved. To support the quantitative analysis the evaluation launched an opinion poll among the followers of UNV/programme social platforms (both Facebook and Twitter). The poll was designed to explore users' appreciation of youth volunteering and to ensure broad participation in the evaluation process. The survey - launched on 20 April and closed on 5 May – received feedback from 233 respondents (56% males and 44% females) aged between 18 and 29. Poll questions were elaborated in English, Arabic and French; the English version is attached as Annex VI. Qualitative information was gathered through remote exchanges with key informants based in Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan and Yemen, carried out from 17 March to 24 April, and during the context of the field mission to Morocco, carried out from 29 March to 04 April.

Data gathering techniques adopted throughout the evaluation included: in-depth key informant interviews, micro-narratives, observations, group discussions and exercises (SWOT analysis). In-depth interviews were based on specific guidelines elaborated to adhere to the evaluation questions detailed in the framework and adapted to the relevant target groups. A copy of the guidelines is included in the attached inception report (Annex VIII).

Considering the evaluation's limited timeframe, the wide scope of the programme and the need to carry out remote interviews and available resources, the evaluation relied on non-probability selective sampling. This means that the number of participants in the

evaluation is limited and that the findings of the analysis may not be fully representative.³ Key informants were categorized into five groups: UNV/UNDP and international organizations' officers, representatives of CSOs, government representatives, youth volunteers, and external experts. Informants were identified by the NYDS and/or UNV PO under the guidance of the evaluation team, based on the review of the project documents and on specific criteria set by the evaluation team. The sample included: a) informants who have had direct experience with the programme/project and could bring an informative point of view (positive or negative); b) informants possessing a thorough insight into issues related to youth and volunteerism in their country. Special attention was paid to ensure inclusiveness and fair representation across gender, age-groups, education levels, sectors of intervention of stakeholders and beneficiaries and geographical areas, as well as the involvement of marginalized groups.

The evaluation exercise involved a total of 73 people (34 of whom are women) at country, programme and HQ level, 71 of whom were interviewed either remotely (Skype) or in person. They included 16 representatives of CSOs, 32 UN/I.O. officers including UNV HQ Staff, 6 government representatives, 15 youth volunteers, and 2 technical experts. Interviews were carried out by the Team Leader in English, Arabic and French, according to respondents' preferences, and lasted an average of 55 minutes each. Annex III lists all participants by country, role, gender and type of interaction (e.g. one-to-one in-depth interviews; group exercises). Interviews held in Tunisia, Jordan and Morocco included representatives of all the above categories as identified by the NYDSs and the evaluation team. In Egypt it was not possible to reach members of the NAC and of the Ministry of Youth (central level). Due to the conflict in Yemen, relevant respondents could barely be contacted via Skype, and though the evaluation team tried to contact them over the phone, exchanges could only take place with 3 informants. The evaluation benefited from consultations with 8 UNV Officers based at HQs who provided their feedback on programmatic aspects and technical areas of competence. An overview of the field work (Mission to Morocco) and country-based exchanges is provided in the document Aide- Memoires, attached as Annex VIII.

The content of each exchange was organized according to the thematic coding technique, which helped identify passages linked by a common criteria/theme, and the evaluation relied on triangulations to validate information from different sources. In line with the mixed method approach (quantitative, qualitative), content analysis was complemented by the review of quantitative data to elaborate on relevant findings and recommendations.

The evaluation team conducted a mission to UNV HQs in Bonn, on 4 May 2015, to present the first findings of the evaluation in plenary, garnering feedback and additional information from relevant officers. The mission provided an opportunity to validate the first findings and contributed to enhancing the debate on the programme performance and future scenarios.

Attached to this report as Annex II is the evaluation logic map designed to illustrate the correlation between project inputs, its outputs and relevant evaluation questions.

3 For an overview of limitations to the evaluation analysis see Annex IX Inception Report, pg. 22, 23.

4

Findings

The following sections present the answers to the evaluation questions, elaborated as was seen relevant to each evaluation criteria, and included as part of the Evaluation Framework, Annex I.

4.1 Relevance

Q1: Are the activities and outputs of the project consistent with the intended impact and effects?

After careful consideration of the project documents and policies at national and international level, it emerged that designed activities and outputs are consistent with the intended impact and effects.

The programme was conceived in 2011 as one of the pioneering interventions following the onset of the Arab Spring. During the course of 2012, a round of national consultations was organized in the five pilot countries involving key stakeholders within the voluntary sector, representatives from the government, civil society, the private sector and the media (averaging 45 people per country). The consultations adopted an inclusive approach involving participants from mostly urban areas who convened to discuss the challenges and opportunities for youth volunteering, and identified priority areas for intervention. The findings of the consultations, which showed, among other things, the general lack of official data and research on youth volunteering in the region, were analyzed and elaborated into the programme document, which is centered on the interrelation of four dimensions: awareness raising, policy, capacity development, and social inclusion. The type of activities designed draw on those proposed actions which were found relevant to all five countries. The above dimensions were developed into four outputs, which constitute the core of the intervention.

Furthermore, the feedback from 85% of evaluation respondents (60 out of 71) showed the project activities and outputs to be relevant to both the needs of the target groups and the specific context of the five target countries. This indicates that the strategy, as elaborated during the above consultation phase, has proved appropriate and to the point, as it tackles those areas which are critical to the promotion of youth volunteering. The 15 volunteers interviewed as part of the evaluation highlighted the need to raise the profile of youth volunteering among the wider public to foster recognition and appreciation, encouraging it to be seen as development rather than 'charity'. The project's organization of national and regional awards, promoting success stories and concrete experience of youth volunteers, responds to this need. During exchanges with respondents from Morocco, the need to legally formalize and regulate the sector defining rights and duties of volunteers also emerged as a priority, leading the project to promote debate and analysis of existing legal frameworks. Informants from Yemen and Jordan acknowledged the importance of acquiring volunteer management skills for the first time, hence the relevance of the

training cycles organized at regional and sub-regional level. Finally, the lack of access to formal volunteering opportunities, particularly in rural areas, was highlighted by informants from Tunisia as an issue to address. The organization of summer camps for youth volunteers (Tunisia and Jordan) contributed to equipping youth with skills and knowledge to better approach the volunteering sector. Considering the above, the programme strategy is still valuable and represents the most appropriate approach to pursue in relation to this type of intervention.

Q2: How coherent is the programme with the development agenda of the different countries and how does this affect the project (positively and negatively)?

Through exchanges with representatives of relevant government counterparts from Morocco, Jordan, Tunisia and Egypt, it emerged that institutions are generally aware of the importance of youth volunteering and the need to regulate the sector, but that countries display varying degrees of engagement at policy level.

The Moroccan Ministry of Youth and Sport, for instance, has recently issued the National Integrated Youth Strategy (2015-2030), which serves as a programming framework for all actions addressing youth⁴. This gender-sensitive strategy aims at enhancing employability, improving services for youth, decreasing geographical disparities and promoting the active engagement of youth in social and civic life, as well as its participation in decision-making. The strategy therefore foresees the establishment of a national volunteering service to promote youth in community work. Additionally, Morocco seems to be oriented towards a dedicated law regulating volunteerism.⁵ The project has contributed to the process by organizing inclusive debates and producing a national evaluation of the institutional and legal framework for youth volunteering.

The Tunisian Constitution, passed in January 2014, enshrines youth participation as a key pillar of the social, economic, and political development of the country, though the country currently does not possess a youth policy. The National Youth Observatory⁶ is one of the key reference institutions for promoting youth development. The project has provided relevant technical support to the Observatory, having assessed its capacity through a dedicated study. Provisions are being discussed for the establishment of a volunteering unit and a volunteering information desk. Noticeably, Tunisia is the only country possessing a law on volunteerism, however it is not enforced, and the opportunity to review specific aspects of the law to make it relevant

⁴ The strategy was also the object of the national youth debate which took place in 2012 and involved 27.000 youth.

⁵ Collectif Marocain du Volontariat (CSO) handed to the national commission in charge of the national dialogue of the civil society a draft document to promote law and legislation on volunteerism.

⁶ Established since 2002, the National Youth Observatory (ONJ) aims to identify the concerns and aspirations of youth in Tunisia, and to monitor and conduct investigations and prospective studies in the field of Youth, in addition to organizing national consultations with youth and youth organizations.

and applicable to the current context is being currently debated. UNV and its partners are also expected to launch a formal debate on the issue.

Jordan has displayed a strong interest in formalizing the volunteering sector. The National Council on Youth is the reference organization, together with the King Abdallah Fund for Development (KAFD), at the forefront in promoting youth engagement through volunteerism. Jordan possesses a time-bound National Youth Strategy 2010-2015, and its next phase is under elaboration. The project has been collaborating with the National Council on Youth and KAFD, particularly at the level of employability strategies. It has also promoted an inclusive debate at institutional level in partnership with the British Council.

According to a UNV mapping of youth volunteerism conducted by UNV in 2011, to date, Egypt has neither adopted a formal definition nor laws or policies on volunteerism. Yet, it appears that there is no youth policy or youth act in Egypt. The project has been thoroughly involved in building the technical capacities of the volunteering units of the Ministry of Youth and Sport.

Yemen has issued the National Children and Youth Strategy (2006 – 2015), which recognizes community volunteering as a critical aspect of socio-economic development.

Because of the nature and type of its activities, it appears that the project strategy is a well-timed endeavour to equip relevant institutions with those conceptual and methodological tools that inform the formulation and implementation of policies fostering youth volunteerism.

The turmoil experienced by Tunisia, Egypt and Yemen over the last few years and deriving government changes, has certainly challenged the project's smooth interaction with its institutional counterparts and the timely execution of activities. Nevertheless, a steady effort was exerted by the project in five countries to maintain and reinstate contacts in order to maintain a degree of communication and exchange.

The programme is also highly relevant to the UNV Strategic Framework 2014 – 2017, specifically outcome 2. "Countries more effectively integrate volunteerism within national frameworks enabling better engagement of people in development processes". The strategy includes youth as one of its programmatic priorities. The programme also forms an integral part of the UNV Youth Volunteering Strategy stemming from the Five-Year Action Agenda (2012-2016) of UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, which calls for the creation of a UN youth volunteers programme under the umbrella of UNV, tapping also into the System-wide Action Plan on Youth (Youth-SWAP). The programme is therefore highly relevant for informing future UNV interventions supporting youth, having shed light on best practices and lessons learned at programming and implementation level. The UN Special Youth Envoy's active participation and support to the programme reflects the above synergies.

The project was designed to be in line with the measures set in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) of each target country. Yet the de-

gree of project contribution to the above framework depends also on the level of project integration with other country-based UN/UNDP endeavours. As emerged in exchanges during the evaluation, the project set-up, with management centralized at regional level, and the type of existing indicators have challenged opportunities to measure the programme contribution to the UNDAF objectives.

Q3: To what extent can this project be easily adapted/replicated in similar areas/situations/countries/regions? What was done to make the project country/region specific?

The programme was designed as a large-scale intervention across five countries of the Arab region with unique and varied socio-cultural and political contexts. The regional pilot is an opportunity to identify strategies and outcomes and to assess them on a comparative basis, building substantial knowledge which can inform future interventions with regards to replicability, scalability and sustainability. In this perspective, the intervention is able to encompass other regions and contexts where opportunities exist to engage and connect youth, based on the value of volunteerism.

The implementation performance of the last two years shows that the strategy is more likely to be viable in stable, development-oriented countries than in conflict-afflicted ones. Also acknowledged was the importance of adopting an approach more tailored to each country's specific needs and contexts, hence concentrating more on those components which are most likely to bring tangible results over a shorter time-span. Experiences across the five countries show that capacity building activities for CSOs and youth (volunteer management training- output 3 and youth summer camps – output 4), for example, hold much potential in that respect, based on the wide interest and participation they garnered and subsequent effects. It was even reported that, during the course of 2015, replications of project capacity building activities had already taken place in Lebanon and Bahrain, demonstrating the ripple effect of the activity and its ability to be replicated. Reflections (elaborated above) on the validity of the project strategy highlight the possibility of replicating awareness activities (output 1), with a focus on volunteering awards and strengthening institutional frameworks, particularly through inclusive debates and analyzing legal studies aimed at informing relevant national policies (output 2).

Establishing National Advisory Committees in each country, and participating in national UN interagency groups on volunteering and youth, were part of efforts to make the project specific to country context and needs.

The regional programme document, signed by government counterparts at national level and shared with UNDP, is the official reference for implementation at regional and country level. The document refers to a complex, large-scale intervention that is geographically and technically sustained by significant financial resources. The actual financial resources raised for the project allowed for a downscaled implementation, while the reference document remained the approved version. This discrep-

ancy proved at times misleading to an accurate understanding of the project's actual scope among key stakeholders. Interactions with government and UN counterparts suggest that the availability of an additional dedicated country-based project document, illustrating the actual project scope at national level, detailing an annual work plan and budget, and with relevant reporting (technical and financial), would increase the involvement and follow-up of local stakeholders. Country orientation can certainly be fostered by involving government and key UN stakeholders in all phases of the project and keeping them regularly updated on the project's progress. This is also likely to further integration of the project in relevant country-based strategies at government and UN level, with a particular reference to the UNDAF document. The regional programme management's technical and financial approach may therefore have at times challenged opportunities to follow-up, integrate and valorise the programme as part of other UNDP country-based endeavours.

Q4: What relevant lessons that emerged from this pilot can inform future UNV projects in similar areas/countries?

The pilot has generated awareness at institutional level of the potential of youth volunteering and has created demand for further support. However, some lessons emerged at the stages of a) programme design; b) monitoring and evaluation; c) coordination and management. In terms of design, the programme was conceived as very technically and financially ambitious. The financial resources actually raised for the project were 36% of the total forecasted budget (see section 4.3 on efficiency). A budget design based on a realistic projection of fundraising opportunities would have been advisable. Similarly, a dedicated and systematic effort at fundraising would have helped secure additional funding. The management and organizational structure of the project was found inadequate for the programme scope. While the regional programme staff included international profiles above the age of 30 with proven experience (1 programme manager P4 level and international UNVs), the field units were managed by National Youth Development Specialists below the age of 30 and often at the beginning of their careers. Field units also suffered from a high turnover of NYDSs. To overcome this challenge, dedicated inductions and capacity building sessions could have been organized for NYDSs to give them the skills needed to manage the project at country level and thereby additional responsibilities; as well as having retention strategies centered on career and skills development. Alternatively, more attractive positions, also with regards to salary, would have drawn the interest of more experienced NYDSs.

Currently, the project relies on skilled and dedicated NYDSs whose continued involvement is key to ensuring effectiveness during 2015 and beyond, and in the case of a second phase of the project or its replication. The programme would have also benefited from a more structured logical framework, thoroughly illustrating the logic linking activities to results/outputs and outcomes, supported by objectively verifiable indicators, and sources of verifications and assumptions. There were also incon-

sistencies in the numbering of work plan activities and following work plan updates, making a straightforward assessment of accomplished activities against the planned ones and relevant contribution to the programme outcomes more difficult. To facilitate the exercise, the evaluation team developed a matrix, herewith attached as Annex V, detailing planned and accomplished activities during 2013 and 2014. Narrative reports could have been designed to be more relevant to the work plans, while work plans and monitoring logs could have reported the timeframe more clearly.

b) The absence of baseline data and indicators of achievement has challenged opportunities to substantiate and valorize further activities and results. It is understood that the value of this initiative is exploratory and aimed at testing a methodology. While existing process-based indicators serve uniquely to demonstrate the actual accomplishment of activities and their scope/reach with sex-disaggregated data, they do not allow the measuring and substantiating of related achievements. Notwithstanding the fact that official statistics on youth volunteering are not available in the target countries, it would have been advisable to conduct country-based baseline surveys at the start of activities, in line with the specific work plan activities and objectives. The availability of such a database would have assisted monitoring and assessing project performance, whilst being a valuable resource for informing future strategies.

c) The challenges in coordination and management derive largely from those highlighted at the design stage, and mainly refer to the type of coordination and communication between regional management and field units. The management approach of the regional programme was, in a few cases, described as rather centralized, thus limiting at times a conducive and harmonized definition of work plans with the field units.

Discussions held with institutional partners at UN and Government level highlight the opportunity for the programme, in the future, to adopt a country-oriented management approach and set-up that would therefore provide it with financial and management resources to better respond to specific needs at the country level. In fact, the programme's potential to have greater impact at country level than at regional level was acknowledged. Although regional activities, particularly the regional volunteering award and training of trainers, proved highly relevant and worthy of continuation, the bulk of activities take place and have impact at country level. In light of the above, it would be advisable for a second phase of the project (and/or eventual replications) to be a multi-country endeavor rather than a regional one, supported by the adequate decentralized management set-up.

The support of a UN entity dedicated to youth and volunteerism that is both stimulating the debate and implementing concrete actions, has encouraged government counterparts to engage more in the opportunities offered by volunteerism at different levels. Exchanges with various respondents highlighted a need for volunteerism to reach disadvantaged and marginalized youth living in remote areas. The positive relationship established with a variety of voluntary-based CSOs indicates the poten-

tial for UNV to promote youth volunteering at the grassroots, thereby reaching a higher number of youth living in rural areas, who could employ their resources and ambitions through localized youth-led development actions. Presence at the grassroots and capacity building of CSOs, not only in volunteer management but also in institutional building, fundraising, project design, and monitoring and evaluation, could certainly be an area of further consideration.

Q5: *What are the minimum criteria within a country to implement the project?*

The project can be effectively implemented in contexts where national governments are keen to support civil society, and where institutional counterparts (e.g. Ministry of Youth) are appreciative of the importance and potential of volunteerism for socio-economic development and are interested in formalizing and regulating the sector as a resource for development.

The availability of existing policy and legal frameworks, such as national youth strategies and laws on volunteerism, would favour integrating the project into a larger concerted effort likely to bring enhanced results. A climate of relative political stability, where human rights are recognized, would favour volunteering as a conduit for development, such as is shown by the positive results obtained by the project in Morocco. The presence of a vibrant organized civil society committed to volunteering is therefore needed to channel volunteering efforts and ensure that relevant approaches be mainstreamed across different target groups and on a larger scale. Due to the UNV legal and institutional set-up, the presence of a UNDP office in the country is necessary for the UNV project's implementation and financial administration. The presence of UN agencies working in the field of education, employability and women's empowerment is also fundamental to integrate UNV's approach and strategy in relevant development actions through specific partnerships.

4.2 Effectiveness

Q1: *To what extent are the objectives of the project likely to be achieved? What indicators demonstrate that? What are the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives?*

The review of project progress and its contribution to the expected outcomes referred to 1) the quantitative data and project indicators available in the existing documentation (work plan updates, monitoring logs, indicators and data on activities); b) the elaboration of feedbacks and inputs by evaluation interviewees, supported by data collected as part of the opinion poll. As previously mentioned, the process-based indicators demonstrate the actual accomplishment of activities and their scope but do not enable objective measuring of the project outcomes. The qualitative analysis per-

formed during the evaluation sought to provide an indication in that sense. Work plans were reviewed, modified and updated annually, based on the resources, opportunities and feasibility identified at country level. The lack of consistency in the numbering of activities across work plan updates challenged tracking and reviewing accomplished activities against those planned. Furthermore, reports elaborated during 2013 did not enable all data needed to update project indicators to be comprehensively captured. To support analysis, the evaluation produced a matrix, herewith attached as Annex V, datelining activities planned and accomplished over the course of 2013 and 2014, and keeping the same numbering of activities reported in work plan updates and delivery reports.

The analysis of activities under output 1 (Awareness of the role of volunteerism in socio-economic development and participatory governance increased) showed most of the planned activities to have been accomplished. The programme designed a thorough communication and awareness strategy (activity 1.1) at regional and national levels and succeeded in its implementation over the course of 2013 and 2014. The regional workshop on youth volunteerism (activity 1.2), initially intended for 2013, was carried out in 2014. As per activity 1.2.1 'create an arena for dialogue between youth and stakeholders at regional level', it is not clear whether this activity refers to the forum event or to a more sustainable long-term action; available information did not support the second option. Activity 1.3 relates to the showcasing of success stories, which were brought to the attention of national and regional public during dedicated awards.

Exchanges with evaluation informants generally showed the project to have contributed to raising awareness of the value of youth volunteering. The plethora of activities organized at national and regional level, along with sustained presence in social media, has enabled the project to reach a large number of youth. Among the major activities organized at national and regional levels were the national and regional volunteering awards, which contributed to raising the profile of youth volunteers among the wider public, with the endorsement of high profile figures such as the UN Youth Envoy, Mr Ahmad Alhendawi. The broadcasting of the regional award by the channel MBC allowed the event to reach a large audience across the Arab Region. One of the five winners of the regional award affirmed that receiving this recognition made her friends and acquaintances more appreciative of her volunteering efforts.

Official project records account for 2391 youth reached through project activities, as of December 2014, while followers of the regional programme Facebook page reached up to 11,800. All the 15 youth volunteers interviewed as part of the evaluation, and who took part in different project activities, were able to make the distinction between volunteering and charity, describing the first as an act performed on a free will basis and non-remunerated, pursued with a structured, systematic and development-oriented approach and designed to bring immediate or long-term impact to benefit individu-

als and communities.⁷ This trend is confirmed by the responses to the opinion poll and particularly to the question aimed at exploring what volunteering means to the target audience. For 37% of the respondents, volunteering is a way to contribute to peace and development and, for 31%, is about undertaking any action benefiting someone else. Volunteering is perceived as a way to be involved in any charity work, for 17%, followed by another 14% who believe that it is about undertaking any action on a free will basis.

It appears that most of the youth interviewed, including some CSO representatives, were not familiar with the UNV mandate nor knew about the presence of a UNV agency in the country before getting involved in the project. The celebrations held for International Volunteers' Day, International Youth Day, and the Volunteers' Caravan and Café des Volontaires have all contributed to raising the profile of UNV in these countries, thereby gaining the attention of youth specifically and of the wider public in general.

More challenging though is reaching youth in remote areas. Their awareness of volunteering could be increased not only through information, but also by involving them directly in development-oriented volunteering actions, having them appreciate deriving benefits through experience.

Another important awareness activity was the Regional Youth Volunteering Forum organized in Marrakesh in April 2014. The high profile event involved a large number of participants from the five countries who engaged, over the course of three days, in a rich program of themed parallel discussions. The programme was able to involve 100 participants from 15 countries, including youth and representatives of civil society, governments and development partners. Participants included youth experts from the target countries and the Region and beyond, as well as representatives from all levels of the UN (UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN Women). Participants were carefully selected from among those able to bring a particularly relevant contribution to the debate, to benefit from the exchanges, and to financially or technically support the project or its replication.

The initiative provided a unique opportunity for inclusive networking and exchange and was widely appreciated. Exchanges with youth participants, as well as with representatives of the CSOs and project staff, highlighted a lack of timely follow-up to the event, which jeopardised opportunities to put relevant recommendations into immediate action.⁸ Participants interviewed expected the programme to continue facilitating the networking activity initiated by the Forum with an adequate follow up to further the debate and exchanges of information/practices. This type of feedback came from all participants interviewed as part of the evaluation. The programme could have identified strategies to empower national counterparts, particularly those of civil society, to operate as a network and to maintain the desired level of interaction, exchange and networking with similar organizations operating in different countries.

⁷ Informants generally defined charity as an occasional act benefiting someone in need, performed on a free will basis often in connection to religious events such as the holy month of Ramadan

⁸ The above were elaborated as part of a back to office report and a report designed for dissemination

Creating an on-line knowledge-sharing and networking platform would increase access to a wide array of contacts and learning tools across the Arab region. It would also promote inclusion, allowing CSOs and individual volunteers, in particular, to obtain and disseminate knowledge, training materials, and information on relevant opportunities without needing to participate in dedicated project events. In contexts where mobility may be limited, the web and social media can be instrumental, particularly if CSOs channel information to those living in areas where the use of ICT is not yet widespread. Such a platform would also enable UNV to monitor how the youth volunteering landscape evolves over time and to identify opportunities for future interventions. Moreover, it could be key to ensuring project sustainability at regional level. Though the project document foresees the production of an on-line platform, significant financial and management resources would be needed to operate it, along with the commitment of national stakeholders to support and promote the tool. However, the possibility to continue the debate and networking at a regional level was highlighted by all informants as highly relevant, and it would be opportune to reach a consensus among key partners over a joint commitment at a financial and technical level to develop and operate the above platform under the facilitation/oversight of UNV.

Activities foreseen under output 2 (Institutional frameworks for volunteerism in the target countries and the region strengthened) were partially accomplished. In 2013, national reports on policy gaps were expected to be produced in the five countries along with capacity assessments and action plans for volunteer units of the government counterparts. In the same year, activities took place in Egypt with a capacity assessment of the volunteering unit of Ministry of Youth along with two national debates on institutional frameworks and policy. In 2014, a capacity assessment was carried out for the National Observatory on Youth, while the national dialogue forums foreseen in Egypt, Jordan, Tunisia and Yemen took place in Morocco and Jordan only. Under this output, training in strategic planning was provided to the Ministry of Youth in Egypt and in volunteer management to its youth centers.

The project encouraged debate on the legal frameworks for volunteerism and highlighted the need for regulation of the sector through mechanisms aimed at formally recognizing volunteering actions and qualifying acquired experience in the light of employability. The project has helped educate relevant institutions on the contribution of youth volunteering to building national capacities for socio-economic development, and contributed to enhancing the management skills of the volunteering units of the Ministry of Youth (Egypt). Inputs provided by the project at various levels and in various forms (e.g. debates, capacity assessments, training, policy reports) with other development actors (e.g. British Council) were also valued. Nevertheless, follow-up is needed to build on existing results and to keep providing technical assistance (e.g. capacity building to enhance youth volunteerism, promote policy dialogue and elaborate policy studies/recommendations) which responds to the short and medium-term needs of institutional counterparts. The government reshuffles following the revolutions posed considerable challenges in maintaining relevant

communication channels. Nevertheless, project staff at field units managed, where feasible, to reinstate and maintain contacts, through the help of key figures within relevant ministries. Efforts shall be made to involve the highest authorities at decision making level within the governmental counterparts.

Networking has progressively contributed to building UNV's reputation as a reliable and dynamic counterpart, whilst creating expectations about continuing support. This was clear from exchanges with representatives of government counterparts in Morocco, Egypt and Tunisia and, to a certain extent, in Jordan.

Under Output 3 (Capacity of youth organisations and CSOs to promote youth volunteering enhanced) the programme carried out the activities planned for 2013, including five capacity needs assessments of the voluntary sector with relevant plans, designing a capacity building programme with the development of a toolkit in volunteer management, and delivering regional training in Morocco. The dissemination of the toolkit expected in 2014 was contextual to the trainings accomplished in Morocco and Jordan. By the end of 2014, provisions for the publication and dissemination of a ToT toolkit on volunteer management were still on-going.

Based on exchanges with evaluation respondents, the capacity building component of the project proved successful and worthy of further exploration based on its ability to generate multiplier effects. Generally, most of the CSO representatives and volunteers who participated in the volunteer management TOT appreciated the uniqueness and value of the knowledge acquired. Interactions with volunteer-involving organizations in all target countries showed them to be receptive and keen to hear about skills development. It is advisable that the performance of those VIOs involved in the training be monitored to assess the impact of project support. A possible indicator (which draws on UNV strategic framework indicators) could be the increase in volunteer recruitment by supported CSOs. Areas for further capacity building include: fundraising, project management, monitoring and evaluation, and institution building. The two sub-regional trainings held in 2014 were widely replicated by organizations in the five countries and Lebanon, reaching up to 305 volunteers. Factors favoring replication are an attentive selection of participants, a preliminary commitment to replicate the training, accessibility to training materials in Arabic, and opportunity to rely on training guidelines detailing relevant approaches and methodologies (TOT approach). As reported, the publishing of the TOT manual has experienced a one year delay, and it is advisable that it be published as soon as possible to allow for timely dissemination and replication of trainings.

Activities under output 4, 'formal structures for youth inclusion through volunteerism strengthened', included, for 2013, developing a volunteer exchange module (activity 4.1.), designing a gender sensitive and inclusive youth volunteering programme to engage women and marginalized groups (national) (4.1.1.), and developing a partnership with national CSOs on volunteer exchange (4.1.2). In 2014, national volunteer exchange programmes were also foreseen in Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia and Yemen. Activities accomplished under this output over 2013 and 2014 include two volunteer

summer camps implemented in Jordan (2013) and Tunisia (2014). The programme partnership with MBC for promoting the regional awards on a continuing basis, and its support to the employment policy launched by the Jordanian private sector, also fall under activities relevant to the output.

Based on the feedback provided by the evaluation respondents, the activities carried out as part of Output 4 help identify innovation-oriented strategies that facilitate technical and methodological sustainability. Although organized as one-off events, Leadership Camps held in Tunisia and Jordan (60 youth) were greatly appreciated by all participants interviewed. This activity highlights the importance of focusing on life skills (e.g. leadership, communication, negotiation skills through practical exercises and experiential groups) to empower volunteers who, in turn, could transfer the above skills at the grassroots to marginalized youth living in remote areas with less access to self-development opportunities. This type of approach may be important to mainstreaming a culture of volunteerism for development while creating awareness and motivation for youth engagement in their own communities.

Another positive practice was the assignment of two national UNVs to two local NGOs of Morocco (Carrefour Associatif and Corps Africa) to become involved, respectively, in a civic engagement project at university level and in coordinating young volunteers active in community work in remote areas. The experience is being carefully monitored and its potential for implementation on a wider scale is being considered. Benefits may include: a) mainstreaming UNV's approach at youth volunteering for development at CSOs and at the grassroots; b) equipping CSOs with qualified resources to inform the programming and implementation of activities; c) promoting local ownership and methodological sustainability; d) promoting career development and long-term recruitment of young national specialists as part of existing CSOs.

4.3 Efficiency

Q1: *Are the activities cost-efficient?*

As previously mentioned, the programme was designed as a wide-scale intervention with a total budget of 5.180.00 USD. Actual funding allocated to the project over the three years accounts for 1.865.370 USD. Remarkably, despite the above limitation, the project was able to implement national and regional work plans designed to adhere to project outputs and outcomes.

The efficiency analysis looked at the project budget, budget revisions and delivery reports to assess level of expenditures against planned resources. A matrix was also produced as part of the evaluation, detailing the budget evolution, relevant expenditures and delivery rates, as relevant to the four outputs. The matrix, herewith attached as Annex IV, includes an overview of the main planned and accomplished activities of 2013 and 2014 and relevant output and outcome indicators compiled ac-

ording to official project data. The information available could not allow for a review of the budget allocated for country-based activities and relevant expenditures over the course of the two years, due to the impossibility of accessing this data through the accounting system in use.

The analysis showed careful planning of activities, with expenditures slightly exceeding the budget during 2013. During the course of 2014, three revisions were undertaken in a timely manner to include newly injected funds and to reallocate unspent resources for future implementation. By comparing the second and third revision, it can be seen that the budgets allocated for output 2 and output 3 were decreased respectively by 19% and 22%.⁹ This can possibly be ascribed to the fact that some activities could not take place as planned in all five countries.

Trainings of trainers proved the most cost efficient endeavor, as compared to other regional activities, such as the regional forum on youth volunteering or the youth camps, having brought a significant multiplier effect. The delivery report of 2014 accounts for USD 108,383.17 for two training events attended by 48 people and reaching up to 257 trainees through numerous replications across the region. Recent exchanges with the evaluation's participants showed replications to still be taking place and that relevant knowledge has been internalized within involved organizations.¹⁰

The regional forum on youth volunteering was also one of the most significant activities, with a total cost of 101,743 USD for 96 participants. Building on connections established among CSOs during the forum, a demand emerged to further the regional debate. In this perspective, creating a web-based platform for regional networking and exchange could represent a cost-efficient solution for the debate to continue with a sustainable and inclusive approach, instead of organizing additional events, which are particularly expensive and demanding at the organizational level.

Discussions with project staff showed national work plans and related budgets to have been carefully designed, with the field and programme units seeking the right balance between the need to respond to specific country-based needs and the financial resources available. National work plans were designed on an annual basis. Before implementing single activities, field units were required to submit in advance a concept note and a budget to be considered, reviewed and finally approved by the programme unit. These mechanisms ensured a meticulous and cost-efficient management of funds at field level. However, as highlighted during the interviews, the above process proved, on occasions, time consuming and challenged timely implementation of the project. The process could be improved were field units to rely on

9 Output 2: budget line 75700 (training workshops and conference) and 71600 (Travel) financed by Germany; Output 3: budget line 61300 (salary and post adjustment – Germany and UNDP/UNV) and 74200 (audio visual and print cost UNDP/UNV)

10 The project can endeavor to assess whether benefits of the activity outweigh its costs by multiplying the market price of a training session in a similar subject and for the same duration delivered in one of the target countries by the number of people trained directly by the project and through replications.

an annual budget based on an approved annual work plan instead of depending on multiple activity-based disbursements.

As illustrated in the section on relevance, the project's institutional set-up, particularly its managerial and organizational arrangements, challenged the efficient implementation of the project. The imbalance between the expertise of those working at regional level and those working at field level, coupled with the need for timely implementation of a dense work plan in a complex socio-political context, placed significant pressure on staff at different levels. As explained earlier, the project should have benefited from a stronger set-up at country level, creating adequate positions to attract more experienced resources, investing in staff capacity building, not only on-the-job but through dedicated actions, and prompting a staff retention strategy. Exchanges with project staff highlighted a discrepancy between the positions at regional level (1 international programme manager P4 level and international UNVs) and those at field level (national UNVs), as well as the type of responsibilities assigned. The budget analysis showed financial resources allocated for human resources to account for 47% of the total budget, with the budget allocated for International Professional Staff accounting for 44% of the HR budget and 22% of the whole project budget. With a view to highlighting an alternative set up for a second phase of the project, the evaluation has developed possible institutional, and managerial and organizational maps detailing profiles required, reporting lines and responsibilities (Annex VI c. Annex VI d.). As mentioned in the lessons learnt, these type of interventions can be better implemented if conceived as multi-country endeavors rather than regional programmes.

Q2: Are objectives achieved on time?

Annual reviews of work plans facilitated realistic planning, and therefore timely implementation. Factors such as a high staff turnover and political instability challenged accomplishing all planned activities. It appears that Morocco, Egypt and Tunisia have been successful in implementing their work plans in a timely manner. In general, national projects were more active during 2014, but slowed down during the second half of the year in Egypt, Jordan and Yemen due to challenges in the work plan definition and, for Yemen, the escalating conflict. Implementation during the course of 2015 will enable key activities that are already initiated to be consolidated and finalized, thereby helping to achieve the four outputs.

Q3: What are the necessary inputs for implementation?

The project at field level was implemented by units consisting of the NYDS supported by the UNV Program Officer and the UNV/UNDP administrative assistant, when applicable. UNDP country offices were in charge of financial administration at field level. The timely implementation of activities depended also on the responsiveness and collaboration of UNDP country offices. The levels of cooperation between UNV and

UNDP varied from country to country, ranging from excellent in Morocco to challenging in Egypt and Jordan. As such, clear administrative arrangements and responsibilities at country level shall be agreed upon by UNV and UNDP to ensure smooth project implementation. The teams collaborated with the programme unit, which provided oversight and overall support. The programme unit consisted of the following international staff: Programme Manager, UNV Communication Specialist, UNV M&E Specialist, and UNV Youth Development Specialist supported by a Programme Assistant. The exchanges with the project staff highlighted that the number of human resources foreseen by the project at regional and country level is sufficient to implement the programme in its current set up, though staff turnover proved challenging for the project. Recruiting NYDS with sound experience at development management appears to have been essential. In this light, retention strategies could be devised for the future, such as offering a more attractive position with capacity building and further career development opportunities.

In terms of Monitoring and Evaluation, the field units have tried their best to regularly provide the regional programme unit with updated data on the progress of the intervention, serving the update of existing programme indicators, as is feasible. This activity provided an insight into the quantity and timeliness of actions implemented at national level. The programme has been monitored based on the M&E tools in use at UNDP level, such as the integrated monitoring and evaluation plan and offline monitoring logs. The presence of the M&E Specialist since February 2014 has contributed to systematizing all available data and information.

4.4 Effects

Q1: *Who has been affected?*

As the first attempt of its kind to specifically address youth volunteering in the five target countries, the project was received with great interest and gained much attention across its target groups. As emerged during the exchanges with the evaluation respondents, the programme has positively affected the following beneficiaries:

- a) As reported by 19 CSO representatives interviewed, civil society organizations have increased, internalized and disseminated knowledge of volunteer management, strengthened their networking capacity, reinforced their ability to participate in the policy debate, enhanced their interest in establishing collaborative partnerships at national and regional level, and fostered their motivation to grow as institutions and to become more effective at implementation.
- b) Government counterparts could generally appreciate further the importance of youth volunteerism for development and could better understand their role therein. Capacity assessments, policy studies, trainings and debates were conducive to increased awareness and engagement at institutional level. This was shown by a clear

demand for further support and technical assistance from UNV to pursue these endeavors.

c) The 20 volunteering youth interviewed in the evaluation emphasized that they are now better equipped to understand the relevance of volunteering with regards to socio-economic development and the value of their role and potentials as agents of change. This trend is also reflected in some responses to the opinion poll, as described later in this section (see Q2). The project has offered them opportunities for self-development, participation, engagement, and networking, which they made the most of it to promote social cohesion, development and a sense of optimism among their peers and communities. The above emerged clearly in exchanges with youth involved in awareness activities and trainings but particularly among participants in the leadership camps, which proved very successful. Some participants even described the initiative as a 'life changing' experience, indicating the relevance of life skills for promoting self-development and engagement also with regards to volunteering for development. The leadership camp organized in Tunisia, for instance, had a knock-on effect as participants passed on to their peers those values and knowledge acquired during the camp sessions. As a result, a group of 22 volunteers across Tunisia spontaneously proposed to act as 'ambassadors' of youth volunteerism as well as 'antennas' for the project. The majority of youth involved in the programme possesses a high level of education (undergraduate or graduate level), are from urban areas and are involved mostly in voluntary organizations based in the capital cities. Although some efforts were also made to operate at governorate level, the project has significant potential to reach those living in remote and disadvantaged areas in order to promote higher inclusion and a culture of youth volunteerism for development at the grassroots. The high level of engagement displayed by youth and CSOs highlights the opportunity to promote their active role in the process.

d) Project staff, particularly NYDSs, involved in the programme have acquired experience at project planning, implementation and networking. Whether still engaged in the project or active in other professional contexts, NYDS have built their capacity toward a career in the field of development management.

Q2: *What real difference has the project made to the beneficiaries (if any)? What are the most significant changes that this project has helped generate so far? Has the project brought any negative change in beneficiaries' lives? Has any innovative approach/practice emerged?*

The evaluation findings show important changes in the attitude and approach of target youth to volunteering as a result of their participation in the project. They now have greater self-confidence, are more aware of the developmental value of their voluntary work, more empowered to relate to relevant institutions, and better able to plan and implement their work with a structured approach and a long-term vision. They can consequently see their voluntary actions as part of a broader scenario en-

compassing government, civil society and the grassroots. In line with these findings, 93% of youth responding to the opinion poll stated that they have acquired a new set of skills through their volunteering experience. When asked how they thought these skills would help them in the future, 44% answered becoming an agent of change in my society, 20% networking with civil society and/or institutions, 14% finding a better job and 12% speaking up for equality.

With a view to further assessing the project contribution to the process of youth empowerment through volunteering, the evaluation organized, as part of the field mission to Morocco, a group session with seven volunteers between the ages of 20 and 30 who had participated in different project activities, held university degrees or higher and possessed extensive voluntary experience. As part of the 'sharing stories' exercise, which was based on micro-narratives, all participants discussed significant voluntary experience. One of them explained that volunteering had opened his eyes to the challenges of the education system and the need to introduce new approaches, eventually inspiring him to become a teacher. Another volunteer emphasized the importance of decentralizing voluntary efforts to remote, rural and inaccessible areas as a way to bring socio-economic development to disadvantaged communities. Another participant explained that volunteering for civic engagement and social cohesion represented his own way to bring about a social revolution, what he defined as his own 'Arab spring'. The exercise opened a debate on the existing socio-economic and institutional challenges for volunteerism and development in the country. Key concepts/elements highlighted during the discussions and indicating a process of empowerment through volunteerism can be clustered into two areas: attitudinal and action-based.

Attitudinal	Action-based
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ change of vision ▪ consciousness ▪ perseverance ▪ learn to change ▪ determination ▪ equal opportunities ▪ courage ▪ self-evaluation ▪ valorization and recognition ▪ sensitivity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ create change proactively ▪ inspire positive change ▪ positive influencing ▪ promote change through specific local actions conceived to produce lasting impact ▪ sharing of information ▪ decentralization and field presence ▪ informing policies ▪ volunteering brings development

Volunteers in the above group session independently carried out a SWOT analysis related to the four dimensions/outputs of the project and presented the outcomes in plenary. Their considerations evidenced: Output 1: the importance of promoting ample recognition of voluntary efforts and increasing the reach of awareness cam-

paings, particularly relying on success stories. Output 2: the relevance of establishing a legal framework for volunteerism also in light of the potential of the Moroccan associative fabric and the interest of policy makers. Output 3: the need to take advantage of a dynamic environment at CSO level, focusing on capacity development and exchange of practices, despite limited financial resources. Output 4: the need to increase access to volunteering opportunities and the importance of structuring voluntary work on the basis of specific objectives and clear recognition of the volunteer's rights and duties. The plenary discussion demonstrated a deep understanding of the opportunities and challenges of youth volunteerism in Morocco, remarkable analytical skills, and familiarity with development issues.

It is thus clear that the project has contributed to individual empowerment, and it now has an opportunity to harness existing skills and expertise in order to bring a sustainable impact at system level, targeting larger numbers of youth and stakeholders. The recommendations provided later in this report may be of reference for such a strategy.

In terms of innovation, the project in Morocco is utilizing the practice of assigning national UNVs to local civil society organizations (see paragraph 4.2. output 4). As mentioned above, the experience is currently being monitored but so far it has been positively received by both UNV and hosting CSOs. This experience may inform a new modality aimed at fostering UNV presence and approach at the grassroots, building local capacities and fostering ownership.

Q3: To what extent can the changes that have occurred as a result of the project be identified and measured?

The above considerations emerged as part of discussions with participating youth who, in describing how the project affected them, would make reference to 'before and after'. The project also appears to be among the first endeavors to promote a debate on youth volunteerism from a policy perspective, and so the active participation and interest of beneficiaries in the debate may be as a result of the project.

Measuring project results and achievements against baseline data would be the most accurate way of showing youth empowerment through volunteerism. This would entail, for instance, identifying a specific target group, assessing the baseline level according to specific tools, monitoring their participation in project activities and eventually appraising acquired skills at the end of the project as part of an end line survey. However, the nature and scope of the project and the scope of its target groups in the region pose some challenges to the above analysis, and so the project currently uses only process-based indicators. Should opportunities for a second phase materialize, it would be recommendable to review project indicators, adopting a more country-oriented approach and a methodology allowing for a systematic measurement of short, medium and long term impacts.

4.5 Sustainability

Q1: What are the major factors that influence the sustainability of the project?

The results accomplished throughout the first two years of implementation indicate the project's potential for sustainability, particularly the socio-cultural, institutional and methodological dimensions of sustainability. Such potential should be developed as part of a clear and concerted strategy.

Socio-cultural sustainability depends on the opportunities for the project to reach youth living in both urban and rural areas with a focus on disadvantaged and marginalized communities, possibly also addressing youth below 18. It also depends on the opportunity to continue raising the awareness of the larger public on the value of youth volunteering through broad-scale media and off-line campaigns involving role models.

Project institutional sustainability will depend on the extent to which national governments are able to advance in the issuing and enforcement of policies and legal measures regulating volunteerism, as well as its formal recognition, particularly in light of youth employability. It will also depend on the degree of proactive networking and collaboration displayed by voluntary-based organizations in their endeavors to internalize and pursue the project mandate.

The opportunities taken by the project to mobilize youth at the grassroots, and to mainstream a culture of volunteering for development in cooperation with other relevant stakeholders at CSOs and the institutional level, will influence methodological sustainability. In this perspective, and building on the positive results of the leadership camps, the project may introduce crosscutting life skills among potential and existing volunteers at the grassroots, so as to enhance individuals' capacities and help volunteerism to thrive. Secondly, involving youth in the design and implementation of innovation-oriented development actions at community level would enable them to experience, first-hand, the benefits of volunteering thus fostering motivation and further engagement.

Key to sustainability is the project's ability to identify, maintain and develop strategic partnerships and synergies with international, local and government organizations¹¹ and to garner key resources (both technical and financial) for joint interventions focusing on outreach and local, innovation-based development actions involving targeted youth.

From an organizational and managerial perspective, assigning specialized national UNVs to local CSOs is key to decentralizing the project approach and closely overseeing project activities implemented at the grassroots. By relying on national UNVs, the

¹¹ Programme established partnerships with various organizations for the implementation of specific activities, among them are: the British Council, IOM; UNFPA; UNESCO; France Volontaires; Carrefour Associatif etc.

project would therefore reinforce its organizational set-up and be better equipped to deal with larger interventions. Indeed, national UNVs are likely to become key assets for local organizations as they will transfer and mainstream technical and managerial approaches needed to reinforce existing institutional capacities.

Economic and financial sustainability proves challenging for projects based on volunteerism. Indeed, strategies can be devised to generate incomes covering the cost of some activities, such as by selling the training toolkit to interested organizations. However, a project of this scope can only be sustained through the external grants of national and international donors. Therefore socio-cultural and methodological sustainability are of most relevance. Having evidence of the results and impact of the programme would contribute to building the programme's reputation, as well as assisting fundraising.

A second phase geared toward consolidation and sustainability, re-programmed at the national level and sustained through development grants and country-based contributions, could be devised to implement the above. In the long term, involved voluntary-based and government organizations could fully take up and internalize this methodology by engaging themselves directly in fundraising and implementation. Efforts toward sustainability would be supported by a thorough monitoring and evaluation system, evidencing achievements, valorizing results and fine-tuning strategies and approaches, as needed.

The above considerations, which hint at a sustainability strategy, are applicable to Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt and Jordan, and possibly Yemen, in a conflict-free or contained situation.

4.6 Youth/Youth volunteering

Q1: To what extent has the project fostered leadership and confidence among youth?

As mentioned earlier, the project has fostered leadership and confidence among involved youth, particularly those who attended the two leadership camps and the volunteer management trainings. The challenge is now to make sure that the above skills are transferred and disseminated for a wider and sustainable impact.

The interviews review highlighted that those youth attending university or already graduated, living in urban areas, and exposed to a variety of social, academic and cultural prospects at local, regional and international level, are most likely to become involved in voluntary work. Most of them tend to work in well-established civil society organizations (Morocco, Jordan, Egypt) or at more recent ones, created in the aftermath of the revolution (Tunisia). On a broader scale, the educational and social profile of volunteers consulted through the evaluation field work is mirrored in the trend provided by the opinion poll. The majority of respondents had a high level

of education (54% graduates and 30% post-graduates) and 77% declared that they currently volunteer. When asked how they volunteer, 76% responded that they collaborate with organizations and 24% through their own initiative.

As per the volunteers' accounts, some youth see volunteering as an entry point for formal employment or as a way to gain specific professional experience which may help them to find a job. Others take up volunteering as a way to spend their free time in a constructive or enjoyable way, while some consider it an opportunity to engage in civil society and contribute to social change and development. Almost all volunteers interviewed were of the third group, displaying a sound understanding of volunteering and its relevance for development. They stated that this realization came as a consequence of their involvement in the project. As such, they were all aware of the socio-economic challenges affecting their societies and youth in particular. Respondents in Morocco, Tunisia, Jordan and Egypt identified outdated education systems, unemployment, lack of trust in institutions, lack of access to opportunities, lack of motivation, limited freedom of expression, social conflicts and violence as the main challenges affecting youth. They all highlighted the need for reform of the education system in a way which improves the employability of youth. They affirmed that youth living in suburban and remote areas are often neglected and therefore more affected, underlining the importance to direct voluntary efforts to support them and help them realize the benefits of volunteerism. The area generally identified as an immediate priority for action was education to support and engage youth in cooperation with local schools and other relevant institutions. With a view to unleashing youth potential for local development and to fostering a change of attitude, respondents highlighted the importance of sensitizing younger generations, below the age of 18, attending middle and secondary schools. As such, they all emphasized the relevance of operating beyond the main cities in order to respond to the immediate and long-term needs of disadvantaged and vulnerable youth. The above considerations therefore demonstrate that volunteering youth are resolved to take action in a conscientious and well-informed manner.

Volunteering youth, however, are also challenged in their endeavors. Potential volunteers often do not have access to information, resources and opportunities to engage in voluntary work. Other obstacles, confirmed by respondents to the opinion poll, include a lack of formal recognition, a lack of mobility and a lack of even minimal financial resources. In addition to financial reasons (26%), lack of time (18%) and socio-cultural barriers (13%), it is interesting to note that 24% of respondents indicated among the biggest challenges the difficulty to find people and organizations that can support them. This highlights a large potential to be unleashed by creating space for youth engagement, and thus the importance for the project to continue building and strengthening the capacities of volunteer-involving organizations to pool additional resources and increase their impact.

Project activities to reinforce the skills of VIOs at volunteer management, to support and empower volunteering youth through youth camps and to involve them in policy

debates represented a first effort to promote a more favorable environment and a larger space for youth engagement. Worthy of note is the opportunity taken by the project to include a youth volunteering component as part of a regional electoral support project, led by the UNDP Regional Centre in Cairo and focusing on enhancing youth participation in electoral processes.

Q2: *Has the project devised an innovative strategy to support youth and youth volunteerism?*

The many project activities promoting awareness, policy debates, and capacity development can be considered innovative as they are among the first attempts of their kind in the field of volunteerism in the Arab region. Among them, three initiatives in particular emerged as innovative: a) the MBC regional volunteering award, which featured five success stories and role models across the five countries, for its wide reach and for promoting volunteering as a socially recognized and valued endeavor; b) the employment policy promoted by 38 Jordanian companies that prioritizes voluntary experience in all entry-level employment advertisements, for promoting the employability of youth volunteers; c) the deployment of national UNVs at local voluntary-based organizations in Morocco, for the opportunity to enhance local organizations' capacity, streamline UNV's approach and open up career prospects.

The project displayed the significance of the UNV Youth Volunteering modality as an opportunity for youth to acquire relevant expertise in the field of development and to gain firsthand experience. For most of the national UNVs recruited as NYDSs, the project experience represented a springboard for a career in development organizations. However, lessons learnt from the programme highlight the importance of recruiting youth with adequate expertise and experience for taking on the responsibilities required by the programme. Specific capacity building interventions for NYDS would have been appropriate to equip them with the additional skills at project management level, along with a dedicated retention strategy.

4.7 Volunteerism

Q1: *How are UNV and UN Volunteers in the project contributing to stimulating national/local volunteerism in general, and youth volunteerism in particular?*

Evaluation participants in the five countries affirmed that people still tend to see volunteerism as 'charity', as an isolated act of goodwill often accomplished in connection with religious celebrations, such as Ramadan. However, young generations, especially those with a university level of education and living in urban settings, see volunteering as a development-oriented and structured activity with a long-term vision. As men-

tioned earlier, this way of perceiving volunteerism is also supported by the results of the opinion poll (see details in the section 4.2 'effectiveness').

The project's awareness activities elaborated on UNV's annual campaigns, such as the International Volunteers' Day, with the featuring of concerts and the launch of the national volunteering awards, thereby attracting a large youth audience. Other awareness initiatives, such as the International Youth Day, the International Happiness Days, Café des Volontaires, Caravan of Volontaires and the Regional Volunteering Awards, also helped raise UNV's visibility among the public. Most of the youth volunteers interviewed were unaware two years ago of UNV's mandate or of the presence of a UNV office in their country. UNV is now also more visible among the NGO and government sectors and in universities.

The project experience showed a need for UNV to implement more long-term country-based projects. Current results and the relationships formed with CSOs support the continuation of UNV's provision of technical support and strategies to boost volunteerism. As expressed by NGOs' counterparts and members of the NACs, the pilot endeavor of UNV has been useful but there is a need to strengthen the partnership with civil society and to operate with a more grassroots-oriented approach in order to empower disadvantaged youth and local communities to respond to their immediate and long-term needs.

4.8 Partnership

Q1: *What are the key factors/approaches used to build partnerships?*

Partnerships were a key component of the project and collaborations were sought with relevant organizations among UN agencies, CSOs and national governments. UNV is considered at country level as the reference organization for the promotion of volunteerism, particularly among youth, and as a hub of volunteering resources and opportunities.

At HQ level, the partnership with the main donor agency, BMZ, was strengthened through its involvement in key project activities and by providing regular updates on its achievements. This relationship, based on accountability, encouraged BMZ to further finance the programme during 2014. HQ's oversight was also instrumental in obtaining the signature of a MoU with 'Amal', the CSR arm of MBC, for broadcasting the Regional Volunteering Award, and its annual replication.

The main partners in the programme are the Ministry of State for Youth of the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Higher Council for Youth of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Kingdom of Morocco, the Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Tunisian Republic, and the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation of the Republic of Yemen. At the end of 2014, 4 of the 5 government

representatives who signed the project document in 2013 were no longer serving. As mentioned above, the programme and field units dealt with this by ensuring regular contacts with authorities to maintain or reinstate relations as was feasible. The field teams (PO and NYDSs) were generally successful in gaining the trust of relevant authorities, despite their young age. It is therefore important to maintain good relations through regular exchanges, for the above benefits, as well as in consideration of the recommendations that will be presented as part of the policy studies over the course of 2015.

Programme and field units consistently sought strategic partnerships and collaborations with UN agencies (UNDP, IOM, UNFPA, UNESCO)¹² and other international development/voluntary organizations (World Bank, British Council, France Volontaires, ActionAid)¹³. These were aimed at enhancing project activities through joint collaborations and financing, and at integrating the youth and youth volunteering component into existing initiatives. Representatives of these organizations are often members of the national advisory committees, which increases opportunities to identify partnerships and to avoid duplications. The project has also been active in the UN Regional Interagency Task Team on Youth, Youth Task Force (Egypt) and in all UN-led thematic groups on youth (Morocco/UNICEF).

Partnerships with the CSOs were particularly successful, as they enabled cooperation with a number of voluntary-based organizations, at field and programme levels, identified through an accurate mapping. Once again, the work of the field units was instrumental in gaining the CSOs' interest and engagement in relevant project activities. The project also often partnered with CSOs operating as a network, which increased outreach and collaborations.

In terms of partnerships with the private sector, the project was among the leading promoters, together with the King Abdallah Fund for Development and the volunteering organization INJAZ, of an employment policy signed by 38 companies in Jordan and aimed at increasing employability through voluntary experience. This represents a good example of private sector engagement. The project was also involved in initial discussions for the establishment of a volunteering platform promoted by the above actors and the National Council on Youth.

The project document included the production of a partnership and resource mobilization strategy aimed at pooling resources from across the region with a focus on GCC states. A draft strategy document is currently available. Strategic partnerships and a resource mobilization plan are needed for the project's consolidation and future sustainability.

12 UNDP Regional Centre in Cairo, regional electoral support project (a youth volunteering component was included as one of the three pillars of the elections project, which focuses solely on enhancing participation of youth in electoral processes). UNESCO contribution to sub-regional TOT in volunteers' management (Jordan/regional). UNFPA participation in awareness campaigns (Tunisia).

13 British Council: policy debate (Egypt, Tunisia, Jordan); France Volontaires: awareness and Café des Volontaires (Tunisia, Morocco); ActionAid production of TOT VM manual (Jordan/regional); IOM and World Bank participation in the assessment of the national observatory on youth (Tunisia).

Q2: How can current partnerships be strengthened in the future?

Collaboration between project staff and relevant UN and international development agencies shall be strengthened to identify future synergies.

Partnerships with the CSOs could be enhanced by forming a forum/network of volunteer-involving organizations facilitated/overseen by UNV as a main partner in the implementation of localized projects and initiatives. Deploying national UNV to CSOs could strengthen these partnerships, whilst relations with UNV could be formalized through an ad hoc agreement. This would facilitate a second phase of the project re-programmed at national level with CSOs representing key implementing partners. A partnership and resource mobilization strategy, particularly if supported by a strong communication plan bringing evidence of impact, would also help substantiate results. The partnership initiated with King Abdallah Fund for Development, Injaz and the National Council on Youth in Jordan, may also be reinforced, exploring opportunities for the provision of technical assistance.

Q3: What is the potential for engaging in new partnerships within and across countries?

The project holds potential to engage in new strategic partnerships. Other Arab countries may favor the opportunity that the project creates to positively mobilize youth, particularly in consideration of the delicate regional situation, the on-going conflicts and related risks for marginalized youth. It would therefore be opportune to look at establishing collaborative partnerships in the GCC countries and pooling resources for a second phase of the project, as an endeavor serving the interests of the region.

Further partnership opportunities may also be explored with the private sector, particularly at country level, and possibly under the oversight of UNV HQs. The CSR approach and corporate volunteering are not very widespread in the target countries, and so it would be worthwhile to keep exploring opportunities in the GCC, such as the United Arab Emirates, where the private sector is more vibrant and there is a greater culture of CSR. Possible sectors may include: ICT, sport, and culture.

It would also be opportune to explore engaging the Arab Voluntary Association of the Arab League as part of an effort to identify opportunities and resources for replication.

4.9 Gender

Q1: Is the project following a gender-mainstreamed approach?

The review of the project strategy shows the project to have adopted a gender sensitive approach in the development of the key components and objectives. Special attention was paid to addressing socio-cultural barriers affecting equal access of youth

to the project activities with a view to ensuring broad participation and, more specifically, the engagement of women and girls in the target region. This effort is also reflected in the design of the outcome and output indicators set by the programme, which include a number of sex disaggregated indicators with regard to key project activities (e.g. number of males and females participating in national and regional dialogues, in ToT workshops, number of people reached through the project). Nevertheless, some challenges related to the reporting system affected the possibility to rely on consistent data for all project activities.

The field phase acknowledged at different levels the importance of gender mainstreaming throughout the project implementation, particularly in advocacy and awareness raising activities at the grassroots, coordination with institutional stakeholders and partnerships and collaborations with CSOs and local organizations. At the local level, the project has collaborated with those CSOs adopting a gender-sensitive approach, where women cover key roles at management level and are targeted at implementation, such as in Morocco. However, further efforts are needed to strengthen the promotion of gender sensitive mechanisms and the provision of guidance through gender sensitive resources (e.g. capacity development). For instance, the inclusion of modules focusing on gender concepts and gender analysis in the training package for volunteer management would help the intended audience, particularly individual volunteers and CSOs, to take into account gender needs and priorities in their own contexts and as part of their roles. Furthermore, some actions initially included in the project work plan could have strengthened the gender mainstreaming approach if implemented, as in the case of activity 1.5 under output 3 'Conduct a gender mainstreaming programme for volunteer engaging organizations at regional level' and activity 4.1.1 under output 4 'Design gender sensitive and inclusive youth volunteering programme to engage women and marginalized groups'.

Q2: What is the level of participation of men and women in the project?

The project has been successful in reaching out to male and female youth through advocacy events, such as the International Volunteers Day, the International Youth Day, the Volunteers' Caravan and Café des Volontaires, across all different countries. In addition to these, regional events such as the Regional Youth Volunteering Forum endeavored to mobilize male and female youth (52 males and 43 female participants) and provided opportunities for youth to engage in discussions on volunteering. Initiatives, such as the ToT and the consultations for national and regional dialogues and the youth camps also recorded the involvement of male and female youth representatives, although with different degrees of participation. For instance, training replications in Yemen recorded a higher participation of women than other countries (e.g 20 women and 13 men according to project records). As reported by relevant respondents, women in Yemen tend to be more active than men in volunteering activities. National dialogues held in Morocco recorded the participation of 49 females out of the 135 youth participants, whilst youth camp in Tunisia engaged

12 males and 10 females.

Q3: To what extent has the project been guided by organizational and system-wide objectives on gender and human rights?

The project sought gender balance and ensured equal access to the proposed set of activities in all countries. In doing that, the project strategy was informed by UN guiding principles on gender and human rights. It is essential that UNV's work on the empowerment of both male and female volunteers builds on this project experience and develops to ensure a more streamlined gender sensitive and human rights based approach. Consolidating the partnership with CSOs, including women's organizations and community groups, strengthening the capacity development on gender awareness and analysis of volunteers, and advocating for gender concerns among relevant stakeholders, are key elements of how such an intervention advances the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. On-going contacts with UNFPA, UN Women and UNICEF also inform relevant gender approaches in the day-to-day implementation of UNV activities. A broader and more inclusive engagement of vulnerable and marginalized youth, both males and females, is also an important aspect that requires more attention to ensure that project interventions of this kind are more aligned with human rights standards.

Q4: Were there measures to guarantee that women and the most marginalized and/or discriminated against had conditions to participate in the project?

As mentioned, the evaluation findings suggest that this area requires further developments and efforts. Indeed, the project action is solicited to expand to remote and marginalized areas in all target countries in order to ensure broader inclusion of vulnerable populations. Strengthening partnerships and collaborations with grassroots organizations is therefore important for reaching out to the most marginalized and discriminated groups, particularly women and girls, through a culturally appropriate approach.

4.10 Coordination

Q1: Are there specific actions to promote coordination among different development actors in the context of this project? Which ones?

The uniqueness of the project allows for collaboration with a variety of other initiatives, especially those promoted by UN partner agencies, such as UNDP. The joint initiatives between UNV and the British Council (Jordan and Tunisia), for the promotion of policy and youth debates, are the result of hard work on coordination. However,

further involvement of the project in UN coordination meetings is needed to enhance project integration in national UN strategies, such as in the context of the UNDAF reviews. Moreover, UNV and the project may seek to promote and coordinate a forum comprising local CSOs and relevant development actors, also at government level, to enhance coordination, particularly if a second phase of the project were to go ahead.

In terms of internal coordination, the exchanges between programme and field units were thorough and sustained. Field units communicated with the programme unit based in Cairo for the day to day management of the national work plans. A coordination meeting was convened in Cairo in February 2014 for the field staff to meet, exchange and plan together, and was positively received. The project should continue creating opportunities for field staff to share practices and experiences.

Q2: Are there particular challenges related to the coordination between the actions of this project and those promoted by other development actors?

During exchanges with project staff, representatives of UN agencies and other development actors, no particular challenge emerged as the coordination activity seemed to have taken place smoothly. Project staff at field and programme levels sought to identify areas of collaboration and coordination through regular contact. However, as highlighted in the sections related to relevance and efficiency, the opportunity to rely on more experienced NYDSs at field level would have favored the project's interaction with stakeholders, particularly those operating at government level, by improving credibility and authority. NAC coordination meetings, particularly those held in Tunisia and Jordan provided further opportunities, in that sense, as some of the members were active within relevant development organizations. A demand though for further coordination emerged from Jordan institutional counterparts to ensure continuity and to enhance the actions already carried out at field level and in cooperation with local development actors. The unavailability of a NYDS and of UNV PO in Jordan represents a further constraint.

4.11 Human Rights

Q1: Are there any actions promoted by the project that demonstrate that volunteerism can support inclusion?

From the analysis of the project documents and the outcomes of the interviews it can be affirmed that the overall strategy, at design stage, took into consideration the human rights-based approach, specifically in terms of participation and inclusion.

The theoretical approach developed at project design was adopted in a number of

activities/actions promoting fundamental rights. However, although inclusion and participation were the main themes guiding implementation, each country presents a unique context and experience and therefore provided a different model of understanding and outcomes.

For example, project awareness activities (output 1) tackled the lack of information on volunteering opportunities, as one of the major factors limiting youth engagement through volunteerism. The wide use of online platforms helped reach a larger audience, although it favoured mostly urban youth with access to the Internet. In Jordan, for instance, the winner of the UNV Volunteering Award got in touch with the project through Facebook and was then able to present her voluntary experience on making the university a more accessible place for people with disabilities.

This demonstrates the project's ability to reach vulnerable youth, offering them opportunities to voice their opinions and needs, though more work is needed to include young people in rural areas, as in Egypt. This is an important first step to build on in a second phase of the project, specifically regarding the use of the Internet/social media as a new way to promote fundamental human rights, such as the right to information, freedom of expression and participation/inclusion according to each country's context and needs.

Through the implementation of output 4 activities (directly linked to social inclusion), the project also tackled some important elements: promoting social cohesion and networks (mostly at country and regional level), fostering a sense of identity, sharing values, enhancing confidence and self-esteem, and creating opportunities for learning and development (as a mean of formal and informal learning).

All these elements were repeatedly mentioned by interviewees and stakeholders, proving that project activities, such as leadership camps and volunteering awards, can support meaningful inclusion. However, for a second phase of the project, more effort is needed to strengthen the human rights component so as to reach rural and disadvantaged areas of the target countries.

Local authorities and governmental counterparts were also included as it was feasible in the organization of the activities and consulted as a mean to develop the duty bearer's knowledge and capacity according to the HRBA. However, approach, modalities and outcomes again differed according to the context.¹⁴

14 In Egypt, for example, the youth councils were involved, whilst in Jordan the National Council on Youth was involved in more than one activity.

Q2: To what extent has the project been guided by organizational and system-wide objectives on gender and human rights? Were there measures to guarantee that conditions were in place for women and the most marginalized and/or discriminated against to participate in the project?

The UN guiding principles on gender and human rights were considered and the implementation strategy was informed by these principles and objectives. For instance, linking volunteerism and democracy, fundamental components of the UN system, was an important guiding principle for the project.

Democracy and volunteerism are forums for the active participation of people, freedom of speech and expression and one can easily be seen as a catalyst for the other. For example, volunteerism increases access to opportunities and services, leads to greater inclusion and participation in development, and the mobilization of resources/communities, thereby encouraging democracy. Similarly, the theoretical approach of the project is active participation from the grassroots level to the top, which volunteerism itself enables.

However, even if the theoretical bases were present and the project was driven by gender and human rights, more work is needed to ensure gender balance and increased support to human rights as a cross-cutting issue. With careful and participatory planning, sustained commitments by government authorities and grassroots presence, a second phase of this project could contribute to fostering democratic governance, peace-building and reconciliation.

Consolidating partnerships with CSOs, including human rights organizations and community groups, and strengthening the capacity development on human rights and human rights abuses are key to bringing about significant changes. Strengthening the partnership and collaboration with grassroots organizations, as already mentioned, is necessary to reach out to the most marginalized and discriminated groups.

4.12 Capacity Development

Q1: *What are the specific capacity development activities promoted by the project? What were the most significant results of these activities?*

As previously mentioned, a number of capacity development initiatives were implemented at regional and national levels. Regional activities included the TOT in Volunteer Management, of which the first event took place in Morocco in 2013 with 30 participants from the five target countries, the second in 2014 with 32 participants from Morocco and Tunisia, and the third in Jordan with 16 participants from Yemen, Jordan, Palestine, Bahrain and Lebanon. The activity represented an opportunity for exchange between volunteers with a range of experiences, and was replicated by par-

ticipants after the second round of training in 2014. The exchanges with the respondents showed selecting the right participants and committing to replicating the training are necessary to multiply the effect of the initiatives. Official project data accounts for 257 replications, however recent exchanges suggest that various replications have already taken place in 2015 in Lebanon and Yemen and that others are planned during the course of the year. Relevant training materials were piloted in 2013 and further enhanced in 2014, with a fully-fledged manual expected in 2015. Participants who took part in the evaluation highlighted the need to publish the manual in three languages (Arabic, French and English) and to include trainers' guidelines, to support the TOT approach. 66% of evaluation respondents who attended the training acknowledged that their skills at volunteer management have considerably increased.

Another relevant capacity building initiative is the leadership camps organized in Jordan and Tunisia for 27 and 22 youth respectively, coming from different areas of the countries. As previously mentioned, the project can build on its success in promoting leadership/life skills in order to stimulate youth engagement and motivation across larger target groups.

The project in Egypt designed and implemented a thorough capacity building program for the Ministry of Youth, starting with a capacity assessment of the volunteering unit followed by strategic planning training for 152 personnel of the Ministry and its Youth Center, across 26 governorates. The training aimed at strengthening participants' capacity to develop work plans and implement activities catering for the needs of local youth. The project also organized a volunteer management workshop for youth centers, involving 29 participants from 15 governorates. The project therefore sought to institutionalize and decentralize unique knowledge and expertise that can be built upon in future endeavors at the grassroots.

4.13 Stakeholders' involvement and participation

Q1: What is the strategy used by the project to engage and involve stakeholders in the different stages of the project? Is this strategy effective? Does it have a positive, negative or neutral effect on the achievement of results? Any innovative strategy used?

Stakeholders and beneficiaries from civil society were formally involved in the project by means of a memorandum of understanding or letter of engagement, which were honored. The binding document with the governments remained the regional programme document signed by the relevant government counterparts (Ministries of Youth). Though the project document outlines a wide-reaching and complex initiative, in terms of the variety of actions, geographic coverage and budget, due to the available financial and human resources, the programme was downscaled while still focused on the planned objectives and outputs. National work plans were duly and timely shared

with the Ministries, and relevant officers were kept updated on the project activities. However, a dedicated national project document detailing activities, objectives and an available budget would be needed to better understand the scope and nature of the national initiative, and promote further ownership, engagement and commitment.

UNDP's involvement is therefore essential, not only in the implementation of technical activities, but also in keeping country offices informed of the project's technical performance and budgetary aspects, sharing relevant reports and creating opportunities for exchanges amongst concerned officers. This approach would help integrate the project into the wider scheme of UNDP country-based endeavors.

The accounts of all participants in the evaluation indicated the project's efforts to involve relevant actors. A participatory, bottom-up approach has characterized the project from the start, with the involvement of numerous key stakeholders at country level in the national consultations workshops. The Regional Youth Volunteering Forum celebrated the project's collaborative and participatory approach that aimed to foster ownership at different levels. Participation was also promoted through the establishment of national advisory committees composed of numerous key profiles. Such an approach involved much networking and coordination at programme and field unit levels.

National Advisory Committees were comprised of large groups of advisors representing main and relevant stakeholders, reaching up to 20 members, and were called upon to attend regular meetings on the basis of ad hoc developed ToRs. NAC members displayed different levels of engagement across countries. The NAC of Tunisia, for instance, attended meetings regularly and was involved to the extent of being consulted on matters going beyond the project itself, which provided an opportunity for constructive dialogue and critique, favoring result-orientation. An accurate choice of NAC members is therefore key to ensuring good levels of participation. In case of a second project phase re-programmed at project level, a smaller group of well-informed members, able to meet on a regular basis would be best. The NAC should also be entrusted with greater responsibility, taking on the role of a steering committee rather than a solely advisory one, including UNV representatives based at HQs and potentially meeting twice a year. This type of set-up would likely favor increased flexibility in responding to needs emerging at technical and organizational levels and allowing for project revisions, as opportune.

The project is guided by the Project Board which includes Senior Beneficiaries and the Executive and Senior Suppliers. It appears that the Board has convened only once since the beginning of the project. Gathering all board members, particularly government representatives of the five countries, proved challenging and posed some limits to the ability to review working mechanisms in light of increased effectiveness.

Re-programming a second phase of the project at country level would provide an opportunity to thoroughly involve UNDP and key stakeholders/beneficiaries in the phase of project design, identifying objectives and results which are achievable, country-specific, and refer to a set of baseline data.

Since volunteerism is a crosscutting initiative, opportunities were highlighted in connection with education, culture and civil society. Therefore, while the official reference at government level would remain the Ministry of Youth, other relevant governmental entities, such as the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Culture, could be approached on an informative/collaborative level.

Conclusions

The project gave volunteering youth in the Arab Region an opportunity to build on their skills and ambitions in terms of development and social cohesion. It emerged in interactions at HQs, programme and field unit levels that the project is being implemented with dedication and commitment, and with the intention of capitalizing on achieved results and best practices.

The programme was conceived at a critical time when Arab youth became the driving force of the Arab Springs, calling for increased inclusion, opportunities and participation in the political sphere. Yet, after four years, Arab youth still face high unemployment, particularly women, and instability and exclusion, leading to conflicts and social divides. Drawing on the values of volunteerism, the program has the potential to harness youth aspirations in order to foster dialogue, reconciliation for inclusion and peace through a youth-led development process.

The programme relies on a strategy developed through a round of inclusive national consultations held in the five countries, and which focuses on four areas: awareness on youth volunteerism, fostering institutional frameworks for volunteerism, enhancing the capacities of CSOs, and promoting youth inclusion. The first two years of implementation confirmed the validity of this approach and the need to continue its implementation, particularly with regards to the current regional context.

Based on the accounts of the 15 youth volunteers and 16 CSO representatives involved in the evaluation, the programme contributed to building the capacities, motivation, self-confidence and engagement of youth. However a more ample and integrated intervention is needed to have impact on a wider scale. Although the programme has reached a large number of youth across the Region, the available indicators are not sufficient to measure the degree of achievement and to substantiate relevant results. The pilot was an opportunity to test a methodology and displayed the programme's potential to have a larger impact if sustained with adequate resources, but the project timeframe and available financial resources proved too limited to promote wide-scale, tangible and sustainable effects at national and regional level. However, such interventions also require constant monitoring and analysis, over an extended time span, to measure their long-term impacts.

The programme's implementation relied on partnerships to support activities and enhance their impact. As such, collaboration was sought with UN agencies, international organizations, and a number of local CSOs, as well as with the governments, as was feasible. Networking at programme and field unit level positioned UNV as the key reference for the promotion of youth volunteering in the target countries. The work exerted at institutional level for the promotion of policy and legal frameworks for youth volunteerism opened an inclusive debate, worthy of sustaining, in which UNV was at the core.

The programme has contributed to raising UNV's profile at national and regional level, highlighting the organization's ability to strengthen its presence at country level through the implementation of long-term development-oriented initiatives addressing government and civil society organizations and aimed at fostering youth volunteering. The positive response of beneficiaries and stakeholders and a demand for continuing support, demonstrate the value of UNV's contribution at the implementation level.

A second phase of the project at country level would therefore enable the project to build on the scalability and sustainability of its results. Morocco, Egypt, Tunisia and Jordan can be recipients of a second phase, but in Yemen the security situation is not suitable. Building on the best practices of the current phase, the aim of a potential second phase would be to consolidate and build on achieved results and to increase impact at field level with a sustainable approach.

The exchanges with evaluation respondents indicate that the most effective way for the programme to promote inclusion and sustainability would be to target youth on a larger scale to include disadvantaged and marginalized youth in remote and rural areas through a dedicated program implemented at the grassroots level. Drawing on successful activities, such as capacity building, and awareness and leadership camps, the evaluation highlighted the value of life skills as a way to motivate youth to volunteer. With a view to nurturing the spirit of volunteerism from an early stage, youth below 18 should be introduced to the concept, in cooperation with relevant educational institutions. Exchanges with evaluation participants also emphasized the need to engage marginalized groups through youth-led and innovation-driven initiatives aimed at promoting civic engagement, employability, education, and women's empowerment. Innovation-driven initiatives can also increase level of access to information, thereby responding to stakeholders and beneficiaries' interest in maintaining a sustained level of networking and exchange with their counterparts in other countries of the region and beyond. Links established with local CSOs, UN partner organizations, and other relevant development actors, confirm the value of partnership as a key strategy to achieve increased effectiveness, impact and sustainability.

The opportunity to re-programme a second phase at national level does not undervalue the significance of regional networking and exchange. However, based on lessons learnt, such as the need to operate in a more cost-efficient and country-oriented manner, and the challenges at management level, such future initiatives should be country-based or multi-country projects.

The regional dimension of the project may also coordinate with the provisions of the MoU signed between UNV and the Arab Federation for Voluntary Activities (AFVA) under the patronage of the League of Arab States. A second phase would generate knowledge and experience to inform innovation-oriented strategies that can be elaborated by UNV, shared at the AFVAs level, and replicated. Similarly, it would be worth exploring opportunities connected to the establishment of the Arab Youth Observatory, the regional think-tank dedicated to youth within the Arab countries and announced at the 34th meeting of Arab Ministers in charge of youth.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, lessons learned and conclusions of the evaluation exercise, the following recommendations could inform the programme's short-term implementation during the course of 2015, as well as the design of a second phase of the project. Recommendations encompass methodological, strategic and operational aspects.

During the course of the coming year of implementation until the project completion date, it is recommended that:

- The programme completes key activities previously initiated such as the publication of the training manual and the success stories booklet, and continues online and offline awareness raising activities and information campaigns, such as the national volunteering award, particularly as part of key celebrations (IVD).
- Follow-up to policy studies and institutional assessments be provided by means of regular contact with relevant counterparts. Capacity building for CSOs and youth volunteers should be continued, as is feasible, along with the monitoring and tracking of youth camps and training replications.
- A resource mobilization strategy, supported by a smart communication package, which substantiates results and valorizes project potentials be developed and adopted. The strategy should address, *inter alia*, funding opportunities in the GCC countries highlighting project potential to harness positive energy and act as a deterrent of conflict and deriving risks for marginalized youth.
- A clear internal communication strategy be elaborated detailing communication and reporting lines across HQs, regional unit and field units. Reporting lines should be clearly defined. Quarterly narrative and financial reports should be designed in a more straightforward manner to assess delivery and the actual achievement of results against the planned ones.
- Monitoring and evaluation be performed also through field missions of the UNV M&E Specialist, aimed at gathering data, appraising project performance and maintaining active institutional contacts in those countries where NYDS or PO positions are currently vacant. Project indicators should also be reviewed/ integrated, as is feasible, and adopted in order to further substantiate project results.
- An online networking and knowledge-sharing platform should be created to favor immediate access to a wealth of contacts and resources, building on the interest expressed by involved stakeholders and beneficiaries to maintain a sustained level of networking and exchange with their counterparts in other countries of the region and beyond. The feasibility of the above should be further considered, based on national partners' commitment to making it operational and ensuring its effectiveness. The possibility should be verified to integrate the suggested platform as part of the existing web-based tools

developed by UNV and currently in use (e.g. on-line volunteering platform) and to link it with relevant mobile applications.

- A final survey should be conducted among youth and relevant stakeholders, drawing on the opinion poll experience carried out as part of the evaluation. The results of the survey can serve to complement baseline information in the case of a second phase intervention.

In the light of a project second phase (in the eventuality that necessary funds be made available) aimed at promoting long-term impact and sustainability and in the case of re-programming for a possible new initiative, it is recommended to:

- Build on the existing partnerships and collaborations, start exploring the feasibility of partnering with a pool of local CSOs, including representatives of government and UNDP/UN for a second phase of the project (3 years) re-programmed at national level (Morocco, Tunisia, Jordan and Egypt), and designed and implemented with the above entities, possibly under UNV coordination.
- Focus on outreach and inclusion of youth and CSOs to address, inter alia, marginalized youth in rural areas through: a) youth mobilization; b) promotion of a life skills programme for potential youth volunteers through the development of a dedicated training/TOT package; c) capacity building of CSOs/VIOs in areas such as project management, fundraising, institution building, and M&E through a dedicated training package; d) better gender and human rights mainstreaming at implementation level; e) promotion of youth-led social innovation projects implemented at the grassroots by CSOs in synergy with relevant UN partners and addressing employability, gender equality, education, and civic engagement. The above endeavors could be relevant to UNV programmatic priority particularly: a) securing access to basic social services; b) peace building; c) youth; d) national capacity development through volunteer schemes; and would reflect the three outcomes of UNV youth strategies 2014-2017.¹⁵
- Establish a thorough system of monitoring and evaluation, based on ad hoc collected baseline data, regular progress reviews and an endline survey. The monitoring activity should be also performed in the context of field visits, and a project management information system be readily accessible by UNV HQs in order to promptly elaborate findings which may inform new strategies and approaches.

15 1) increased recognition of the contribution of youth to global peace and sustainable human development through volunteerism, and inclusion of youth voices in the development discourse; 2) improved capacity of relevant stakeholders to support an enabling environment for regional, national and community youth volunteering for global peace and sustainable human development; 3) increased and diversified opportunities for young people to contribute to global peace and sustainable human development work, especially of the united nations, through a united nations youth volunteer modality.

- Reinforce management structures at field level, including one project manager and one project assistant referring directly to higher management level and relevant technical expertise operating from UNV HQs. If country-based management structures were adequately equipped with experienced human resources and entrusted with the required management responsibilities, the regional unit would no longer be necessary. Field unit managers could then directly refer to a higher management level at UNV HQs, supported by dedicated M&E expertise, responsible also for facilitating regional activities, as is feasible. These could cooperate with relevant UNV sections, such as those in charge of results-based management, communication and resource mobilization. This would also contribute to streamlining coordination and communication between field units and HQs. The project should devise a thorough staff retention strategy. The deployment of national UNVs to local CSOs would favor implementation at the grassroots, and, with the above set-up, field units should refer directly to HQs. With a view to further facilitating implementation, annual budgets should be directly disbursed to the field units, as is feasible, and managed locally in cooperation with UNDP.
- Reconsider the composition of national advisory committees (NAC) at country level to include fewer members and to operate as steering committees, thereby providing strategic guidance on the course of the project and allowing for relevant revisions, as opportune.
- Explore regional collaborations with the provisions of the MoU signed between UNV and the Arab Federation for Voluntary Activities (AFVA) under the patronage of the League of Arab States, and look at opportunities in relation to the establishment of the Arab Youth Observatory.

Attached as Annex VI is a roadmap further detailing the above recommendations and relevant timeline.

The table below lists main recommendations to be followed during the course of the following months of project implementation until its completion.

Evaluation recommendation 1.				
Finalize on-going activities as relevant to the 4 outputs				
Management response:				
Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
<p>1.1</p> <p><u>Output 1.</u> Continue carrying out awareness activities at national and regional level with a focus on success stories and awards; re-consider the setting up of a web-based regional platform promoting networking, knowledge sharing and opportunities on volunteerism.</p> <p><u>Output 2.</u> Follow up with institutional/legal studies; conduct reports on policy gaps as feasible.</p> <p><u>Output 3.</u> Publish the TOT and disseminate it.</p> <p><u>Output 4.</u> Promote national volunteers' scheme at CSOs level</p>	2015/2016	HQ/Programme UNIT		
<p>1.2</p> <p>Equip project with adequate MIS and review indicators and conduct a final survey (web-based opinion poll)</p>	2015	HQ/Programme UNIT		
<p>1.3</p> <p>Design and implement a resource mobilization strategy</p>	2015	HQ/Programme UNIT		

*Status of implementation is tracked electronically in the Evaluation Centre database (ERC)

Evaluation recommendation 2. Verify the opportunity to implement a project second phase in the light of consolidation and sustainability

Management response:

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
2.1 Discuss with local partners/ stakeholders, possibly in the context of the project board meeting, a project second phase and build a consensus	2015	HQ/Programme UNIT		
2.2 Subject to 2.1, design a country-based/multi country project II phase with a participatory approach	2015	HQ/Programme UNIT		
2.3 Subject to 2.1, conduct fund-raising and start securing funding	2015	HQ/Programme UNIT		

*Status of implementation is tracked electronically in the Evaluation Centre database (ERC)

