

Section 8 – Comments, suggestions and feedback

8.1 Positive and/or negative comments, other suggestions and feedback:

“As a JPO in a country office, I feel that the JPO Centre is too little involved in my job welfare and that welfare is left with UN staff in the office to a too large extent. There should be some regular dialogue between country office and the JPO Centre to avoid leaving the JPO too vulnerable.”

“Thanks for making me feel that I can say more than I usually do with colleagues.”

“I would like to suggest that the first questions regarding pre-assignment briefing etc only be posed to JPOs in their first year of assignment, as we in 2nd and 3rd year have already answered those question”

“I feel privileged and honoured by being part of the JPO program. As a citizen from a developing country, the international experience we receive is highly appreciated as well the fact that we are motivated to work in an environment with strong values and dedication.”

“It would be great to have a previous course on how to use ATLAS. It is a central instrument for us as UNDP’s JPO. AS my experience has shown me, learning ATLAS is something more of learning by doing and is very time consuming. On the other side, being some kind of a critic in the best possible way, sometimes is difficult to trace a line between UNDP’s mandate and other agencies mandate. In UNDP we can get involve in almost everything because our mandate is very ample. This year I had the opportunity to interact with staff of other agencies and they had that impression too. So, it would be nice to give an induction to new JPO’s about the difference between UNDP and other agencies. I don’t know, maybe something like a matrix where is easy to compare what UNDP does compared with the mandates of other agencies. I have learned and know I am more aware of the difference, it is only a suggestion for future JPO’s.”

“It would be really good to get information on the Induction course a few months before - it is a lot of planning!”

“More face to face networking opportunities among JPOs should be promoted.”

“Thank you JPOSC!”

“Thank you very much for your support!”

“In general terms, I am not satisfied with my JPO working experience. I love my duty station [] and I am enjoying my stay here, but the office is working very inefficiently, my tasks are not enough, I don’t that my supervisors support me. My main tasks are being developed thanks to an ex-JPO who faced the same problems as me 2 years ago.”

“Currently (and as far as I know), most sponsoring governments are exclusively funding their own citizens. In the spirit of development support, it would really be good to fund JPOs from developing countries too (may establish a quota that each sponsoring gov. has to pool a certain percentage of its funds to sponsor JPOs from developing countries)!?”

“As I've just been working for 2 months, a few of the questions are a bit hard to answer at this point. All in all though, I have been very satisfied.”

“As already mention the lack of transparent career development support/programme; in addition the observed conduct to keep staff members in the dark until very few days before their contract expires, whether their contract will be extended (or whether they have been elected for the position they applied for). This becomes unacceptable in times when there are other job offers from outside the UN System, once you become responsible not only for yourself but as well for a family.”

“It would be great if the JPOSC establishes a contact with JPOs who have not used the DTTA. This could help to brainstorm on possibilities that are linked to the career aspirations of a JPO. Thank you for the interest in JPO concerns that is expressed through this survey!”

“Positive: JPOSC has been there at all times, Thanks indeed! Negative: more liaison with COs and supervisors should be made prior to JPO arrival. TORs should be more specific.”

“The service from the JPOSC has been good, I am happy with it. My major disappointment in my assignment has been how UNFPA and the UN system works: a lack of planning, a lot of duplicity, inefficiency, which makes me really think if I would like to stay at the UN system after my assignment. (Previously I worked also in an international development cooperation organization)”

“Thanks for unique support during my three years as a JPO! You have all been incredible! Till next time...”

"I am very much satisfied with the services provided by the JPOSC. Thank you very much for the great support!"

"The Induction in the duty station has for me been very poorly executed from the CO. The assignation of project portfolio is also very ad hoc which result in bad continuity."

"I think it was maybe too much for me from Asia to JPO centre to be trained for only one day on my duty station in Asia. Hope there will be other ways to be trained by not travelling back and forth."

"I greatly appreciate JPOSC for is very professional and helpful assistance on the regular basis. JPOSC was especially helpful during the process of third year extension of my JPO assignment."

"Overall very good work experience and skills acquired."

"All in all despite the many frustrations in the job, being a JPO is a very very interesting opportunity which I can recommend warmly to all."

"This has been a fantastic opportunity, which is why it's difficult to be negative about the working environment. I am really disappointed in my assignment. I am also really unhappy that my view of the UNDP has deteriorated so much. I have lost a lot of respect for the organization while working here. It felt much different at HQ, but here, I am beginning to doubt my own skills and am questioning whether or not I want to continue my assignment. I have been really lucky with my supervisor, and really happy with the JPOSC. But there are a lot of things that need to also be there to make it an enjoyable and valuable experience. This said, I have been here for under a year, and this could be, in the culture transition cycle, a really low period for me (although, I have been in the country for almost 2 years). Maybe it's more of a work culture transition."

"This is a fantastic programme with great opportunities for young professionals to learn new skills and enter the UN system. However, it appears it is often used by Agencies as a mean to get 'free' staff to fill in gaps in their Agency. I believe this is really something that ought to be reflected on in the future."

"I am highly satisfied with the services of JPOSC! Congrats on the great work!"

"I consider the opportunity of being a JPO as a great learning experience in general. There are a lot of issues that depend on the concrete team which you join, but in general I think it is a very positive experience."

"The JPOSC is great! You are seem to be the only place where people actually know how to help me with any questions. The support from my field office has been very insufficient. They do not have the knowledge on how to deal with a JPO."

"The JPO SC truly provides quality and timely support. Thank you for the great work in 2009 and Happy New Year 2010!"

"I strongly recommend to provide more mechanisms to the JPO and information related to the Code of Conduct in case of harassment. Also sometimes it creates confusion when the JPO belongs to another agency and not the UNDP. In those cases, it should be more clear to whom the JPO should contact, JPOSC or the respective agency or headquarters. In those cases where it is a hardship duty station, like Angola in my case, the JPOSC should ensure that all the security measures are in place before the arrival of the JPO. And before sending a JPO to a duty station I think it is a key factor to check which kind of supervision the JPO will have in order to take advantage of the JPO assignment as much as possible. The support received from the JPOSC in administrative issues, etc is more than excellent. However I think there should be a more close follow up on the conditions of work, the satisfaction of the JPO in the post, etc."

"I THINK THE WEBSITE IS EXCELLENT. IT COULD BE NICE TO RECEIVE SPECIFIC INFORMATION TRAINING REGARDING YOUR OWN PROFILE AND INTERESTS"

"Thanks for the questionnaire! In some cases, it felt as if it was designed for UNDP JPOs only. And I missed the option of 'not applicable', because e.g. in terms of career planning, I have not experienced the support from the service centre yet, so I felt that I could not have an opinion about it. However, thanks again for taking the experiences of JPOs seriously and wish you good luck with analysing the results."

"In general I consider the questionnaire very useful. After some more months of assignment I will be able to answer it more precisely. The question on harassment and abuse of authority is difficult to answer without exactly knowing how this is measured at UN. I would suggest to add some clarifications on it."

"The JPOSC has become a great tool for taking advantage of a unique learning and training opportunity as it is the JPO program. The pre-departure briefing was extremely useful, specially to adjust expectations and understanding UN staff policies."

"In general, I am satisfied with the JPO experience, but I am disappointed on human resource management at UN, we can see on daily basis issues of lack of accountability in the workplace, no

appropriate behaviour and no measures are taken by senior management. It has consequences on the quality of the work and the working environment.”

“I think the JPO-experience depends a lot on where you are, and what you make of it, rather than what is under JPOSCs control to help you with. I got a JPO that was very specific to what I've done previously, and as such I function as any other staff in my organization, with the same responsibilities and opportunities. I'm listened to as a professional and my ideas and work is respected and appreciated. But I've also heard from other JPOs that they are treated not much differently from interns, and put to menial work tasks and never given the chance to prove their worth. It depends on if the skills you have are really in demand where you work, or if you are "just another employee". In that regard, I think I've been lucky. You can perhaps not always achieve it, but I think JPO positions should really meet a demand in an organization, so that the JPO, based on his/her unique set of skills, is really given some responsibility and appreciation. If JPO positions are too general (like, "economist" instead of "climate change economist"), you will get more applicants, but you also risk that the JPO will be put to less satisfying tasks.”

“Thanks for the great support from the JPOSC!”

“Workload is too high and demanding, affecting health conditions; also, there are so many problems in many of the projects UNDP is running due to a number of reasons, including individual mistakes etc. I consider this lack of professionalism. Individuals are often measured/evaluated by the amount of money s/he mobilized. This makes me in doubt whether I want to continue in UNDP upon the completion of my assignment, as I consider this not pure development work.”

“Thank you so much to the JPOSC for your support and information.”

“The administrative support is excellent (or maybe the person that was assigned to me is particularly good at it!). I have only started a couple of months ago and have not really made use of the other JPOSC facilities yet!”

“The service of the JPOSC is an invaluable support, which I greatly appreciate”

“Thank you for conducting this satisfaction survey and continued dedication to your services.”

“The JPO programme is a great and well-functioning channel for young professional from developed countries to gain on-the-job experience in international development. However, the success or failure of each JPO assignment is greatly dependent on particular dynamics of the supervisor-JPO relationship. At the end of the day, no coaching or training on either part can ensure this relationship to be successful if the supervisor does not have the interest or time to be also a mentor and not just a boss for the JPO.”

“I believe the learning experience and professional development of a JPO depends to a large extent on the quality of the supervision he/she receives. Through my recent change of department I am realising how different the experience can be in this aspect. Ideally selection of a JPO position should take into consideration some formal assessments of the supervisors' management capacities. Supervisors could follow compulsory trainings or seminars in management oriented for the JPO programme. Special Tools for the JPO programme could be developed to facilitate, definition of objectives, activities and expected outcomes and the formal supervision of JPOs.”

“JPOSC provided excellent support throughout my JPO assignment! The human factor of JPOSC staff is one of your key assets, I believe, in providing quality service to JPOs and exceeds the "regular" bureaucratic type of service one might expect. Happy New year and many thanks!!”

“Thank you for your support and keep up the good work!”

“In general, a great experience to be a JPO, but have some comments/suggestions: Those supervisors that don't have the capacity to provide guidance and proper supervision should not be granted JPOs. What about mandatory training for JPO supervisors to qualify, or at least a background check of references? The JPO Centre does an excellent job, but quality control of supervisors would make the JPO programme even better. Or is that perhaps a part of the learning experience?”

“Challenges in terms of complex supervision system, difficult to work in different practice areas, especially regarding the roles and responsibilities between CTA, PM and PO. Sometimes confusion on the expected responsibility as PO, when supporting different areas/portfolio.”

“I would like JPOSC to send more job vacancies on the communication area.”

“I would have liked to benefit from a mentoring programme in my first two years of assignment, however when I started no such programme existed. A mentor might have greatly helped me in terms of getting to understand the organization and shaping my career.”

“Thank you for the opportunity the JPOSC gave me. It is a great experience though not easy every day.”

"JPO is a great and challenging experience. Not everything is perfect but learning how to deal with it is a useful practice itself that will help us in the future. In general terms I am satisfied with the assignment and I keep working to improve it and get the maximum from these years. Thanks for the survey."

"I think I need a change, I don't think I have the strength to keep on fighting for everything here...but I am lost in the way, since all my "positiveness" is finishing..."

"I think this survey should be done when we have already been half a year in our assignment because after two months it is too soon to evaluate most part of the areas. However the support we receive from the JPOSC is extremely positive, thank you very much!"

"Would be nice if there are more than one induction training in NY per year so those travelling frequently can attend one."

"I am quite happy with support from JPOSC, always answering quickly. However sometimes local administration is not well informed about JPO issue (e.g. assignment grant, DSA etc...), so I needed to revert to you for explain them."

"Overall, I'm very satisfied with the assistance of the JPOSC. The communication lines are very short and the people are very accessible. Thank you."

"The question 1.12 should also take into account the case where the JPO never had a chance to discuss tasks with Supervisor. Thank you for the JPO Satisfactory Survey: it is a very good initiative!"

"The JPO programme is an excellent opportunity to learn and work in international organizations. It is good to have JPO programmes of more than 2 years and ideally covering field and HQ experiences"

"I am very grateful that I have been given this opportunity."

"thank you for the great support i have received from JPOSC before and since my reassignment. It is a great experience, but I have unfortunately been placed in a division where I cannot really use my skills and where I will not be able to stay after my JPO assignment."

"I like in a way that how well you do is very much up to yourself, but I do not believe that an organization such as UNDP should have such weak structures so that so much is up to the individual and so little is actually part of the institutional memory."

"I can just say that so far, my jpo experience was under my expectations, I feel to have lost some skills and competences acquired over 6 previous work on the field. I feel very disappointed"

"It has always been a pleasure to communicate with JPOSC, and assistance that I have received has always been very professional, timely and friendly."

"Reform the programme! Reform the UN!!! Do not recruit JPOs with more than 2 years experience please!!!"

"I would like to know what one could do in a case where one sees another JPO to be seriously harassed, but due to fear or other factors this person does not want to report the case. Is there a way to anonymously report it? Also, what can the JPOSC do in such an instance?"

"This is the start of my second posting as JPO. [My donor country] has granted me the opportunity of being a JPO again with UNFPA in [a new duty station] after being a JPO for [a number of] years with [a different agency and duty station]. I learnt a lot during my time in [my previous duty station], and I am worried that the learning curve in this current office will be a lot slower for reasons of poor management of human resources, although there is plenty of very interesting work to do here."

"JPOSC works really well. Congratulations."