

Niels Lohman (left), UNV Team Lead Capacity Development, and Lykke Andersen, Manager of the UNDP Junior Professional Officer Service Centre, received the Innovation in Recruitment award awarded to UNV for Talent Programme for Young Professionals with Disabilities.

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UNV receives Career Development Roundtable award for Innovation in Recruitment

The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme is honoured to receive the 2019 award for Innovation in Recruitment for the Talent Programme for Young Professionals with Disabilities from the International Organizations Career Development Roundtable (CDR). The Talent Programme was created in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme, and is supported by the Governments of Germany and Sweden. In 2019, 31 UN Volunteers with disabilities, including 15 deployed under the Talent Programme, served with UNDP across the world, as well as numerous Online Volunteers. In 2020, new volunteer assignments will follow to expand opportunities for persons with disabilities.

The CDR Awards recognize innovation in the day-to-day work of human resources practitioners from the international public sector in the fields of recruitment and employee engagement. With support from public and private sector organisations, the CDR Awards provide the opportunity to showcase, share and learn from the collective experience in successfully addressing strategic or operational challenges, as well as recognize the potential of creativity and the people behind it.

What issue did we set out to address?

The Talent Programme addresses the need to leave no talent behind and increase employment opportunities for young persons with disabilities. It provides an innovative solution for the implementation of the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy. It offers young persons with disabilities the opportunity to get international work experience and UN exposure. It builds an inclusive UN workforce and grows a talent pipeline of young professionals with disabilities for jobs in the UN and SDG-related areas.

What did we do?

The Talent Programme recruits young professionals with disabilities for 12 month assignments with UNDP, UNV and UN offices. Placement offers are assessed against accessibility criteria, inclusive selection processes designed, reasonable accommodation measures put in place and targeted talent outreach conducted. Assignments are accompanied by onboarding support, professional development and diversity inclusion training for host offices. Participants are recruited under the UN Volunteer and JPO categories.

What was the outcome?

Launched in 2018, the Talent Programme deployed the first UNVs in early 2019. So far, 15 persons with disabilities have been deployed with UNDP and UN offices. Participants have gained work experience and exposure to the UN System, achieving professional growth and increased employability. Participating offices have gained awareness and experience in inclusion of persons with disabilities, overcoming bias and misconceptions. Barriers to an inclusive workforce are being removed.

What lessons have we learned?

- Inclusion of persons with disabilities is welcomed and encounters genuine interest.
- Barriers are frequent, yet solutions can be found, prompting a fresh look at how we work.
- Attracting and mobilizing qualified candidates is a challenge.
- Recruitment processes/tools need redesign to be inclusive and accessible.
- Readiness of offices to change and adjust is a precondition for inclusive work environments.
- Leveraging abilities is ultimately what matters, less the focus on the disability.

UNV will continue to raise awareness that disability inclusion in the United

Nations workforce is underway and brings in the abilities we need for achieving the 2030 Agenda. We will also continue to scale up our engagement with partners, including UN agencies and Member States, to advance disability inclusion across UNV's volunteer mobilization and recruitment efforts.

The International Organizations Career Development Roundtable (CDR) brings together international organizations across the multi-lateral sector, in particular from the United Nations system, the European Union, international financial institutions, as well as the national public sector, academia and private institutions. The event was attended by around 200 human resources leaders/practitioners from over 100 UN agencies and international organizations.

Global

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