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# UNIVERSITY VOLUNTEER SCHEME FOR YOUTH EMPOWERMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF PAPUA: REVIEW OF UNV PROJECT

*REPORT TO UN VOLUNTEERS PROGRAMME*

JUNE 2013



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## REPORT TO UN VOLUNTEER PROGRAMME

### INTRODUCTION

The University Volunteer Scheme (UVS) was originally designed to complement UNV's community coordination under the UNDP began the People Centred Development Program (PCDP) in Papua and West Papua. These provinces have the lowest HDI in Indonesia. The main expected output under the revised PCDP was *two university volunteer schemes developed and managed by partner universities in Papua and West Papua*.

This review was conducted from 3 to 24 April 2013, focusing on implementation of the last group of CDVs placed in 7 villages in Minyambouw and North Manokwari, West Papua and 5 villages in Wamena and Sarmi, Papua. They were placed at the end of 2012 and finishing May 2013. It includes meetings with the UNDP, PCDP management, the universities, District Governments, and each of the communities hosting CDVs. 11 out of 14 CDVs are interviewed (one was ill and two are not made available by the university). Structured, interpreted interviews are conducted with community representatives and with their volunteer. Community impact, volunteer growth and development, project implementation including volunteer management, and future sustainability are the foci of the review. The analysis addresses the expected project outputs; summarizes the main challenges; and provides recommendations for future such projects. A complementary knowledge product addresses programmatic lessons learned and practical recommendations to the universities and partners for sustaining local university volunteer schemes serving remote, rural indigenous communities.

### BACKGROUND

Papua and West Papua are both provinces granted Special Autonomy status in 2001. Separate HDRs for Papua and West Papua were published in 2012. Rich natural resources, fiscal decentralization policy and special provisions and funding connected to the Special Autonomy have led to strong economic development. But increasing disparities in distribution means that poverty is still very high. The most poor are the indigenous Papuans (OAP), who generally live in rural, isolated areas. Challenges include limited and poor infrastructure, widespread gender disparities, rapid spread of HIV and highly prevalent corruption. Progress is insufficient on the MDGs, particularly poverty reduction and improvement of the quality of health and education. Expressions of dissatisfaction include social economic jealousy among people and renewed calls for independence. Both HDRs call for increased pro-OAP planning and budgeting.

The *University Volunteer Scheme (UVS)*, originally 2009-2011, was integrated into an existing large UNDP project, People Centred Development Programme (PCDP) in Papua and West

Papua, which works with Indonesia's national development programme focusing on fostering an enabling environment for the achievement of the MDGs.

Besides UNDP and Provincial Planning Governments, the key UVS partners were two provincial universities: UNIPA for West Papua and UNCEN for Papua.

The Project outputs (p.11) were linked to Outcome 2.1 of the PDP: *Localized approaches to achieve the MDGs implemented*; and were defined as:

1. A sustainable University Volunteer Scheme that is managed by the universities UNCEN and UNIPA and contributes to community development in Papua;
2. Enhanced capacity and employability of youth in Papua through the implementation of the University Volunteer Scheme;
3. Indigenous youth and communities benefit from improved livelihood opportunities and delivery of services;
4. Indigenous communities benefit from enhanced partnership and cooperation with local governments.

The project was to capitalize on the existing UNDP/UNV partnership in PCDP, where Community Facilitators (national UN Volunteers) were supporting community mobilization and services. The university Community Development Volunteers (CDVs) were to live with the communities and engage on a daily basis. To supplement workshops, it is to provide hands-on partnerships and on-the-job training (pendampingan) to develop local capacities.

The universities were responsible for the orientation, administration and management of the CDVs. UNDP, the local governments, and other UN agency and international organization partners were to support the orientation and on-the-job trainings of the CDVs as well as support skills-trainings and service delivery by the CDVs to the youth and other community members.

The project structure plans generous support with management by an international UNV Chief Technical Advisor with two Deputy Project Managers (one DPM each from UNIPA and UNCEN), a national UNV Monitoring Officer, a national UNV Assistant Coordinator in West Papua, and a national UNV Administrative Assistant at the UNV field unit. Also two national UNV Project Facilitators were to support the CDVs in their communities.

The first group of Community Development Volunteers (CDVs) were deployed in early 2010. A *Six-Month Project Review (Period: January-June 2010)* found that while the CDVs had integrated well in the communities, the volunteers were *not doing anything significant to help developing the villages*. Lack of support and supervision for the CDVs; need to engage with NGO, UN, and/or Government partners in working with targeted villages; project and fund management; and lack of clarity of roles among implementing partners were cited as challenges. The risks of the geographic challenges and limited communication access were raised, with a recommendation for satellite phones. The main problem cited is lack of supervision and coordination on field level. Incomplete project staffing is noted with a national Technical Advisor hired to manage the initiation of the project while the international UN Volunteer is being recruited. The UNV Project Facilitators and Monitoring Officer were hired in the second quarter of 2010. Also few of the NGO, foundation, and UN agency partners identified to support the

community efforts were involved or replaced. It was found that some CDVs often left their duty station without permission and extended their stay in the cities.

The revised programme document for the PDP (2011-2013, Phase 2) does not include the UVS in the discussion of Phase 1 and lessons learned; nor were any adjustments based on lessons learned made under the continued inclusion of UNV in Output 2. The narrative consolidates the original 4 UVS outputs into three:

- a) Developing capacity of two partner universities in establishing and managing university volunteer schemes
- b) Increasing employability of individual fresh graduates by supplementing their theoretical training with volunteer fieldwork experience
- c) Serving indigenous population by placing university volunteers in targeted communities, where fresh graduates transfer knowledge to host communities, contribute to the delivery of basic services and facilitate participation and engagement of marginalized groups in community decision-making process.

The key PCDP related expected result is *two university volunteer schemes developed and managed by partner universities in Papua and West Papua.*

By the time of this review, three previous groups of CDVs have been deployed by UNIPA and two by UNCEN. UNCEN delays its activities until approval of the request that their Deputy Project Manager be paid. Meanwhile, implementation phase 2 of the UNDP PCDP is delayed because of a one year delay in donor funding. The programme reduces activities in the interim. Although funding is delayed and the MOUs with the universities were ending, UVS continues. In this time period, against the recommendation of the PO, UNV HQ orders the end of the UVS project management interim contract of the national staff; the attempt to recruit an international UN Volunteer is halted because the Government refuses to approve a visa; and the three project support national UNV positions are not continued. UNV transfers UVS management to UNDP under the PCDP UNV coordinator who leaves three months later in April 2011. UVS is placed under PCDP Phase 2, under UNDP management, but with no assigned manager.

In August 2012, a new PO arrives in the UNV field unit (which had gaps and one additional PO since 2009). She resolves the issue of the university grant agreements that expired in May 2011. In June 2012, a Project Manager is hired by UNDP for West Papua and the DPM for UNIPA is selected. The original DPM for UNCEN is still on-board, but a UVS PM for Papua is hired in November 2012. Meanwhile PCDP Phase 2 is extended through September 2013.

There is no indication of any management response to the previous review recommendations. Records and reporting are still lacking. The history, still with many gaps, has to be pieced together by repeated questions to current and former field unit members, UNDP, UNIPA, UNCEN, and government and community contacts.

## **REVIEW OF THE UNIVERSITY VOLUNTEER SCHEME (UVS)**

This review was conducted from 3 to 24 April 2013, focusing on implementation of the last group of CDVs placed in 7 villages in Minyambouw and North Manokwari, West Papua and 5 villages in Wamena and Sarmi, Papua at the end of 2012 and finishing May 2013. It included meetings with the UNDP, PCDP management, the universities, District Governments, and each of the communities hosting CDVs. 11 out of 14 CDVs were interviewed (one was ill and two were not made available by the university). Structured, interpreted interviews were conducted with community representatives and then with their volunteer. Community impact, volunteer growth and development, project implementation including volunteer management, and future sustainability were the foci of the review.

### **I. DID UVS CONTRIBUTE TO COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT?**

#### *WHAT WAS DONE?*

Both the Communities and CDVs provided positive lists of activities conducted by the Volunteers. The most common activities supported community celebrations, education and youth activities, food nutrition, family health promotion, report and proposal writing, sanitation/beautification of neighbourhood, water distribution, farming, building a public toilet, building a fish pond, and fixing or renovating equipment.

Water distribution, public toilets, and fish ponds were the most frequent major development projects. They were funded by the project's youth small grants, based on priorities identified by the communities and proposals written with the CDVs. No proposals had yet been funded in Papua. In West Papua, the projects were being implemented in one village at a time to enable the CDVs to support each other and the University to provide expertise. In the case of water, the main supply had already reached the Communities. The problem was that distribution pipes were broken and needed repair. The CDVs worked with community members to provide the replacement pipes, install them, and demonstrate maintenance.

The majority of CDVs were engaged in at least some education related activities. In Betaf 1, 2, and 3 in Sarmi, the 5 CDVs were each teaching one grade in the school, supplementing the one teacher and principal. In addition they were assisting with a kindergarten, which had been established by previous Volunteers, and had established after-school tutoring for students and literacy training for adults. In West Papua, many Volunteers were engaged in school support activities, such as helping with early childhood education programmes, developing learning materials and fixing playground equipment.

In Communities, especially those with female Volunteers, CDVs supported family health and women's groups: cooking nutritious food for the children, maternal and reproductive health discussions, and hand-washing. In some cases, their activities linked with existing projects in the village, e.g. toddler weighing and improved nutrition.

Volunteers were frequently asked to help Village Government staff with administration, computer training, writing reports and proposals.

In West Papua, CDVs organized regular community clean-up activities to pick up litter, cut the grass, and plant flowers. While this was not necessarily new activities, Communities reported that the Volunteers supported them to schedule them more regularly and provided equipment and fuel to care them out.

Since the Volunteers in West Papua arrived in their communities in late November, they actively engaged in Christmas preparations, including decorations, painting and repairing the churches and writing proposals to the government for funding of Christmas celebrations.

Other activities similarly linked to support of community celebrations and ongoing activities. Volunteers joined in working the village garden in the jungle, coconut harvesting, making traditional bags and other handicrafts, cooking and baking cake, making coconut oil, and leading youth church group activities. One volunteer organized the renovation of the village shuttle bus, redecorating the interior.

#### *WAS IT WITH OR FOR THE COMMUNITIES?*

Generally, the Communities felt that the Volunteers were there to do for and give to the Communities. When discussing their expectations, they exhibited an aid recipient orientation, frequently requesting that the project give more funds, materials, and volunteers. There was a lack of understanding that the Volunteers were there to organize and implement activities with community members, and build mutual capacity. Since the volunteers were young people, perhaps the villages felt that they were there to learn, not to build community capacity.

The support of the Village Head-man was repeatedly mentioned by Communities and Volunteers as key to community participation. Many Volunteers reported this as their biggest challenge, with cases where the Head-man was not living in the Community or gone for long periods. Without permission of the Head-man, Community members were reluctant to cooperate. Even with the support of the Head-man and other key community leaders (Head-man's wife, Minister, teacher, Council members), volunteers reported limited community involvement. Internal politics and jealousies were barriers. Some Volunteers focused on engaging youth in activities, but this was challenging in communities where youth attended school elsewhere and preferred other activities when they were at home. Although the project document suggested that CDVs would develop youth groups to identify initiatives in enhance their employability, the CDV activities focused more on what the adult leaders of the Communities wanted.

Most activities engaged only a small number of community volunteers. The Communities continued with their own plans, and support to projects of the Volunteers was not made a priority, even for those which would seem beneficial for sustainable development. Work on the public toilet and fish ponds were taking months and completion delays were explained as the Communities being too busy to complete their parts.

### *WAS CAPACITY BUILT? WILL THERE BE SUSTAINABILITY?*

Due to the remoteness of many of the villages, materials and supplies, e.g. diesel and construction materials, have to be transported from the cities. The CDVs, especially in West Papua, not only did much of the implementation of the activities, they with the University also arranged for the delivery of materials, paid for most of the materials, and provided technical support, e.g. fixing mower. While the Villages do seem to have funds and resources, there was little indication of contributions by them.

When asked regarding sustainability, the Communities felt that maintaining the fish ponds would be in their economic interest. The public toilets are being constructed near the community centre or Church, which could help with maintenance. Although there were demands for more toilets spread among the community. Some leaders, e.g. Head-man, Minister, had decided to build their own latrines. Regarding the water, the CDVs trained community members on how to keep the pipes repaired. The Communities liked the clean-up and beautification efforts and felt that they would continue, although probably not so frequently.

### *HOW COULD CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMUNITIES HAVE BEEN STRENGTHENED?*

The 12 Communities visited had different and, too often, unclear or improper understanding of the UVS project and why the CDVs were there. Some of this seemed due to aid dependency distorting expectations. An example is one village which claimed that it had been promised that water would be provided directly to every house.

During this end-of-project review, Communities asked what were the goals of the project and for clearer information on the administration and finances of the project. Volunteers mentioned that the Communities did not always understand why they were there. In Papua, not all the Communities were aware that the University was a project partner. The goals and participatory capacity development focus of the project needed to be clearly explained during the Community selection process; and the expectations by the Communities needed to be repeatedly assessed and managed by the University and project managers throughout the project. They, not the CDVs, are responsible for managing these partnerships.

At the same time, the expectations of the Communities to engage with the CDVs to identify and implement initiatives, and subsequently sustain them, needed to be better understood and agreed with. Part of the selection process of the communities should include the feasibility of the voluntary engagement of the Community with the CDVs. This includes understanding the political, social, and physical dynamics of the Community, especially whether the Head-man can provide appropriate leadership and if there will be Community consensus. Absentee Head-men and community jealousies and rivalries were repeatedly mentioned by CDVs as difficult challenges.

Although the District and sub-District Governments were influential in the selection of Communities, there was little evidence of partnering with NGO, other UN entity, or government programmes at the Community level. Communities and CDVs expressed disappointment in not

being supported by the project and University to strengthen village and government relations and engagement.

Gender roles in the Communities were challenging, and affected the integration and opportunities for CDVs. CDVs of both genders highlighted lessons about relating to men, women, and mixed groups. In one community, the Community Secretary complained about having a woman Volunteer. He wanted help with administration, but did not feel comfortable asking a woman. In the future, he requested that if women were placed, they should be in group that includes men. If one Volunteer is to be assigned, it should be a man.

### *STORIES OF COMMUNITY IMPACT*

Some stories about the impact of the Volunteers were shared:

- One CDV helped to bring garden produce from the hill down to the village and sell. He did not worry about working hard and being dirty. This commitment by the Volunteer is an example for the Community children.
- A CDV visited each house to ask for input. Some thought this was strange. But it helped him understand the community and be accepted.
- A CDV organized the community to clean up a field. Now the children are playing football there.
- In Betaf, a kindergarten was established by an earlier group of Volunteers. Volunteers from the Community continued it after they left. Although the CDVs are again running the kindergarten, some community members are still involved. The kindergarten should continue after the project ends.
- Parents report that because the young and enthusiastic CDVs help in the schools, their children are more interested in going to school and are attending more.
- Through a youth project grant, a reproductive health workshop will be offered which will designate some young women and pregnant women as resources for supporting and teaching others in their and other Communities.

## II. DID THE UVS EXPERIENCE BUILD THE CAPACITY OF THE CDVs?

The project also targets the CDV members as beneficiaries, to *expand their knowledge and professional capacities through their work as volunteers with the local government and communities.*

### *WHAT DID THE CDVs LEARN AND HOW WILL IT BE USEFUL IN THEIR FUTURE?*

The CDVs learned some specific skills, such as gardening and weeding, herbal medicine, planning fruit, making red fruit oil, making traditional bags and shells souvenirs, cooking local foods, and how to make coconut oil traditionally. They also worked at learning the local language.



They provided examples of how they appreciated village wisdom. They respect the forestry management practices with strict field rotation rules which enables long term conservation. Villagers taught them village boundaries and the importance of respect and equal treatment. They saw how villages survive challenging circumstances and lack of facilities. How families help each other, and that they are happy without having much. They learned village customs regarding gender, e.g. women cannot go into a house where there are only men. They learned to identify community leaders and seek their advice, especially from the Head-man and his wife.

They recognized challenges, such as village politics, being sick without facilities, sanitation, and lack of transparency. They found inequity, with students at the 4<sup>th</sup> level still not being able to read, teachers paid but not there and principals not caring, and parents not supporting schooling. They found it difficult to engage the busy community members as volunteers.

The CDVs felt their experiences would be useful in their future careers and personal lives. They gained confidence in their abilities to handle different situations, respect differences, problem-solve, and relate to people who are different. Most Communities and Volunteers agreed that it took one month before they adapted and were considered members of the Community. Having accomplished that, many of them said that they now could have jobs working with communities, and some said that they want to keep helping villages. One wants to publish what he learned about working with people and communities to build awareness about volunteering, and that it is not all about money.

Most expressed willingness to volunteer again. Some have already encouraged friends to volunteer. Several had been KKN university interns, and recommended making that programme more like this one. Some who had received less management support during the CDV experience, were more reserved about future volunteering.

### *STORIES ABOUT IMPACT ON THE VOLUNTEERS*

Both Community members and Volunteers shared about the experiences of the Volunteers:

- Volunteers felt part of the Community when members gave them fruit and vegetable products.
- A woman leader taught a female volunteer how to organize a programme for the woman, after an attempt did not go well.
- Volunteers joined in Community celebrations, helping out however they could. This willingness to work made them members of the Community
- There was one Moslem woman Volunteer. The village takes care of her and make her feel like she belongs. She helped in the garden, and so was given vegetables. She is also given rides. According to the Volunteer, the Community tries to avoid foods she cannot eat when she is there. They also let her know when there will be Christian services.
- Volunteers have sought advice from among Community leaders about how to engage the Community. They have learned to be personal and patient.

### III. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION /MANAGEMENT OF THE VOLUNTEERS

The universities and the UNDP Programme Manager together were to be responsible for the project implementation. The universities had lead responsibility for the induction, administration and management of the volunteers. In West Papua, both staff were connected with the university and worked closely together on service delivery and volunteer management. In Papua, the relationship did not work well. The PM focused on the project outputs, e.g. small grants; and the University defined its role as administering the volunteers.

- Selection of sites: Based on the original project design, the universities commissioned anthropological studies to determine where government, communities, and the universities could work together in placing volunteers. In West Papua, only one 'representative' community per district was studied. So the study could not guide selection of specific communities. In Papua, the selection of the communities based on government recommendation seems to have preceded the anthropological study. Those communities were studied. Both universities depended on recommendations from local government for the actual site selections. In West Papua, the priority was on communities who were not beneficiaries of other aid projects. In Papua, the sub-district head decided the community placements of the 5 CDVs sent to his district.
- Volunteer terms of reference:
  - West Papua: Volunteers were to develop work plans to help/teach the community. The volunteers were to socialize with the community, learning from the community and multi-cultural skills.
  - Papua: Volunteers were to work with youth primarily and generally with the community. They were to engage with other stakeholders to address community needs, e.g. other government programmes.
- Recruitment:
  - West Papua: Some of the recent university graduates dropped out prior to placement in the communities. But once they were deployed, there was high retention.
  - Papua: Recruitment of the last round was challenging because of short recruitment timeline and competition from job opportunities. In Wamena, the project filled the vacancies with two former CDVs already full-time employed with the government to 6 month CDV assignments.
- Induction/Orientation Training:
  - All the CDVs received induction training, and seemed generally satisfied. The main area with repeated requests for strengthening was briefing on and preparation for their specific host community, including both social and political dynamics and living conditions.
  - In West Papua, the induction was held with the university. In Papua, UNDP led the induction. The university did not participate and was not familiar with the training content.

- Preparation of communities:
  - West Papua: The University DPM played key support and bridging roles to both the volunteers and communities. The DPM assisted with the introductory mapping and needs assessment process which each volunteer conducted in their community.
  - Papua: The CDVs introduced themselves to the communities. In Sarmi, the sub-district head was reported to be unhappy when the 5 volunteers unexpectedly arrived to start their assignments.
  
- Support during assignment:
  - The CDVs had requests on how to be better prepared for their assignments. They would have liked to have been better briefed about the district and village where they would be going and better prepared for the living conditions. If possible, maybe they could visit before their assignment starts. They would like to have known the challenges within the community and had better people skills, especially political skills. Some asked for more basic practical skills training, e.g. how to build simple buildings, basic medicine, and agriculture.
  - Communities expected CDVs to submit successful funding proposals to the district government. They wanted better training on developing and following up on proposals.
  - Some volunteers noted that the far distance from the city and lack of facilities were difficult to adjust to. One university partner required all CDVs to come to the city once a month to get their stipend, buy food and other supplies, check in with university, and plan/prepare activities for the next month. In addition, the staff from the project and University at times went to Communities to support mapping or implementation of the small grant projects. These CDVs seem satisfied with the support from the university and project, and were well networked with other volunteers, sharing transport and joining in each other's activities.
  - Another group of volunteers requested better coordination among their University and the district and village heads when and while they are deployed. They requested more support and guidance in doing their work. Prior to this review, there had only been one site visit, which was by the Project Manager. The University was only addressing administrative issues. Both the Communities and Volunteers raised concern about adequate support to volunteers when they are sick, and lack of transportation. They requested more concern for their welfare. They complained about not receiving their stipends. It was discovered later that the University had neglected to provide for volunteer medical coverage.
  
- Activities during assignment:
  - The volunteers spent most of their time supporting everyday community activities (farming, crafts, food preparation) with a small grant project addressing a development result, e.g. food sustainability through fish pond;
  - In West Papua, volunteers initially conducted mapping with their communities to identify a list of community needs. This list is the basis of the CDV's actions and is also to guide actions of future Volunteers sent by the University. One Volunteer

suggested that it might be better for the needs to already have been identified and the Volunteer should just go and address it.

- In Papua, one group of volunteers were assigned by the Sub-District Head to work in the school and with education; allowing the Volunteers to quickly focus and begin their efforts. The individual Communities shared other priorities with us, but it is unclear if they have provided such inputs elsewhere, including to the CDVs designing the small grants projects.
- Common volunteer activities among villages may be an approach to consider, especially since West Papua community projects tended to address similar initiatives (public toilets, fish ponds, and water distribution).
- Post assignment:
  - Neither university have provided post-assignment planning and preparation. One university does have an end-of-service meeting and recognition ceremony for the CDVs and now wants to include that topic.
  - A listing of current activities of former CDVs does not provide clear evidence of employability. For UNIPA, 5 CDVs were employed for 2 years in a project not associated with the university, but are not employed now. Two are volunteer field assistants for a village community empowerment programme collaboration that includes the university. One is working for the Government.
  - Information on the first group of UNIPA CDVs and one volunteer from Phase 2 is not available. For UNCEN, three volunteers work for the government in Wamena. The current status of the remaining eleven is unknown, which also includes lack of systematic follow-up with former volunteers.
- Supportive partnerships:
  - As already noted, there was little evidence of active partnering within this project. The planned community level partnerships to strengthen activities, training and support to CDVs, and joint capacity development and services to the communities seem never to have been implemented. There are not links to existing UNICEF, ILO or even UNDP projects in the area.
  - Although the District and Sub-district Governments were influential in village selection, they seem otherwise not involved in supporting the CDVs. In a few cases, CDVs helped with existing projects in the village, e.g. data collection on pregnant women, this was not due to a partnership with the relevant government unit.
  - Relations with Government varied. One university has strong relations with the local villages, but needs to build relations at the district level. A joint meeting including UNV with the District resulted in expressions of interest and an invitation to the university to submit a funding proposal to support sustaining UVS. The other university has strong relations at the District and sub-District level. The District Government stated that they need human resources to support implementation of the District plan, so very much wants to partner to sustain UVS. However, this university needs to enhance relations with the villages on behalf of the volunteers and ensure

participatory processes which include them in decisions on activities and development objectives for their own communities.

- Monitoring, reporting, and knowledge sharing:
  - The degree of monitoring by each university was evident by the quality of the relationships with the villages and volunteers. It was more positive the more the university representatives clearly know the situation and accomplishments of the volunteers and villages.
  - Whether there are regular formal reporting and knowledge products is unclear. Neither university discussed documenting activities and results or developing knowledge products to share and promote UVS. Both are important for accountability, quality improvement, and promoting sustainability.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **A. UVS EXPECTED OUTPUTS IN THE PCDP REVISED PROJECT DOCUMENT**

1. Developing capacity of two partner universities in establishing and managing university volunteer schemes
  - While the design and structure of the UVS originally provided for UNDP, UNV, Government, and other partnerships to support and capacitate the universities and volunteers in development of local communities, this design was not fully implemented or resourced.
  - The universities as active partners in this project have been equally responsible for achievement of the project outputs. In so far as the university embraced and prioritized this role ensuring a quality volunteer experience and service to the communities, and did not sacrifice those priorities because of the project's support and resources challenges, they have built their own capacities and demonstrated ownership and readiness to manage the university volunteer scheme. The initial heavy management and administrative structure when it was managed by UNDP would not have been sustainable by the universities. Due to the project implementation challenges, the transition was not gradual or planned. For the university that did take control of their own learning process, there initially were some management issues which UNDP brought to the attention of the university. The results were positive. UNDP and the university in the other province focused on managing a project for results than on capacity development.
  - A key component of any volunteer scheme capacity development is volunteer management skills. This review provides a range of lessons learned regarding what works and what does not regarding managing youth volunteers for effective engagement with communities. The lessons relate to supportive partnerships; selecting appropriate communities and development activities; preparing the volunteers as well as supporting them during and after their assignments; and monitoring, reporting and ensuring sustainable results. It must be understood that

ensuring the well-being of the volunteers can never take second place, or not be done because funding is delayed. If this is ever in doubt, volunteers should not be deployed.

- Monitoring and reporting including volunteer reports and community assessments, as well as knowledge development and sharing, are key ingredients for ongoing capacity development which were not well addressed.
2. Increasing employability of individual fresh graduates by supplementing their theoretical training with volunteer fieldwork experience
- Inputs from the volunteers as well as the communities document strong learnings, especially in cultural adaptation, problem-solving, organizing, and self-initiative. They were sensitized to people living under extremely challenging and arduous conditions with minimal resources and opportunities. They also identified ways in which communities and volunteers should and should not be supported under such circumstances. They generally felt these experiences have relevance for future employment, especially if they are with communities, as well as for inter-personal relationships.
  - Volunteers requested more training in soft skills, such as handling political relations; and technical skills, such as farming and building, which they could use and transfer.
  - Additional factors influence actual employment. However, both universities could have done more to enhance job seeking skills and support the volunteers to identify possible employment opportunities, during and after they complete their service.
3. Serving indigenous population by placing university volunteers in targeted communities, where fresh graduates transfer knowledge to host communities, contribute to the delivery of basic services and facilitate participation and engagement of marginalized groups in community decision-making process.
- The CDVs primarily did activities and delivered services. They were engaged in special and ongoing community activities, provided informal education through discussion about livelihood and health issues, and supported education formally and informally. Both the CDVs and communities displayed a charity oriented relationship with the communities as aid recipients.
  - Transfer of knowledge through community workshops and capacity development by the CDVs did not happen to the extent planned. In part, this seemed because the youth volunteers were not seen as experts. They served adults and helped provide equipment and labour needed to meet their requests, e.g. fixing lawn mowers and providing diesel. The adults, especially leaders, felt they were teaching the volunteers. It was also not the expectation of the universities, who also viewed volunteerism as a way to assist a community in need and not necessarily to build capacity for the community.
  - It was appropriate for the young CDVs to transfer knowledge to children. They were encouraged to work with and mentor children and youth through the schools, churches, sports, etc. As university graduates, regardless of their academic background, they were considered about to teach. However, the project design of

establishing youth groups and engaging them in community volunteering only occurred in a few communities. In many of these remote villages, the youth attended school outside the community, and were not frequently available. This made it challenging for the CDVs to build relations and organize youth who had other preferences for using their limited free time.

- The small grants projects were to be determined by and implemented mainly by the youth. However, since funding was involved, the community elders led the determination of the projects.
- Most CDV activities were not related to community decision-making. Regardless, participation and engagement of villagers with CDV activities were generally very limited, e.g. one volunteer helping tutor, only three or four people who help with the scheduled village clean-ups. Perhaps some CDVs were able to include some marginalized groups, i.e. women and youth, in the community mappings and needs assessments processes. But it was clear that decision-making remained in the control of the Head-man and village leaders. There was little understanding by the community that they were expected to engage and come to own the activities themselves.
- Overall, the CDVs contributed to the villages as role models for community children; physically improving the villages through fixed water pipes, fish ponds, and public toilets; contributing to education, literacy, and computer skills; and promoting health, sanitation, and better nutrition. The question remains of the sustainability of these contributions because the limited community volunteerism and engagement raises questions of ownership and whether what the CDVs started will be continued and maintained.

## B. PROJECT MANAGEMENT

UNV transitioned too much of the project management/oversight responsibilities to UNDP, either because of headquarter decisions or UNV and project staff transitions. In addition, most of the budgeted UVS human resources when they left were not replaced.

- Non-renewal of the interim national project manager contract occurred at the decision point about whether the project could—or should—continue into Phase 2. This would have been a time to have conversations with the universities about the lack of partnerships and specific plans for them to build capacity. It should have defined a replacement management structure. Instead, the project spent months kept getting ‘patched’ enough to keep going, such as the National Administrative Assistant in charge, but losing knowledge at each transition.
- Variances are a realistic aspect of implementing any project, but adequate adjustments are needed. Implementation was left mainly to the universities by mid-2010, due to staffing and resource challenges of UNDP and UNV. Then the grant agreements with the universities were allowed to lapse.
- In mid-2012, with the arrival of a project management experienced UNV PO, the project began to be implemented again. Now UNV has committed the remaining

UVS project funds to support capacity development for sustainability of the university volunteer schemes, through exchanges, knowledge development, partnership building, and support to design.

- At all levels, there was insufficient attention to reporting and recordkeeping. Due to the high turnover and shifts in how the project management, the lack of handover of information made the implementation of both the overall project and this review challenging. To piece together even an incomplete timeline for the project required testing the memories of current and former staff and volunteers. UNV seems even to have left this responsibility to UNDP. However, it was clear at the PCDP National Advisory Board Meeting in April that UNDP considered UVS to be UNV's project.

### C. SUMMARY OF MAJOR CHALLENGES:

Partnering with local universities in sending young recent university graduates as volunteers to remote rural communities has inherent risks. The risks for the volunteers, universities, communities, UNV, UNDP, etc. should have been carefully and continually analyzed and mitigated. Sufficient understanding and response to these major challenges would have enhanced programme outcomes, volunteer health and safety, reputation of the universities, and community relations.

- Very remote rural assignment locations with limited facilities and sanitation, health risks, as well as lack of phone and internet access
- Aid dependency of communities leads to wrong expectations of the volunteers as givers and the communities as receivers
- Local politics and gender issues add to challenges
- Limited community engagement and therefore limited ownership of the activities organized by the volunteers raises sustainability questions
- Expected project partnerships with other government activities, NGOs, UN agencies, etc. do not occur and others are not pursued
- High UNV field unit and UVS staffing turnovers and UNDP project implementation challenges impede effective project management, hand-overs, and continuity
- In so far as a university, especially the assigned staff, sees UVS as primarily as a grants project, and not as a reputation-building initiative to develop university-related youth as well as communities in need, the university does not extend sufficient ownership of the programme or concern for the well-being of the volunteers and communities.



#### D. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE PROJECTS:

Based on this review, the following are recommendations for sustaining or developing future university volunteer schemes:

- Specific result indicators on the building of capacity of the universities built into the project document
- Dedicate time and resources to ensure common understanding of the project, implementation strategies, and expectations among UN partnerships, volunteers, government, and communities. While these need to be in writing, that is not sufficient.
- Risk management related to volunteer health, safety and security in their community placements must always be the highest priority for all concerned. Regular check-ins/monitoring of each volunteer by the university responsible for volunteer management should be mandatory.
- Ensure regular monitoring. Participatory evaluation or review after each volunteer class. Then ensure that there is an agreed response among all partners to the findings, which adjusts the project document and work plans accordingly.
- Require better documentation and regular reporting. This should be specifically defined in agreements and linked to receipt of grants by the universities. In terms of project reports and record-keeping, even if UNV delegates project implementation, it still has responsibility to ensure proper management and administration of its funded projects.
- Periodic joint meetings with Government, senior university representatives, UNDP, and UNV should provide updates and allow discussions about resolving challenges. They should occur more frequently if relationship or implementation issues arise.
- Promote regular good practice knowledge sharing and exchanges of ideas and support among participating universities and project partners.
- Ensure project management responsibilities are carried out, regardless of project challenges, staff and volunteer turnover, resource issues, or partner transitions. Understand that poor project management puts at risk the project impacts, the volunteers in the communities, proper use of resources, and the reputation of various partners.