

UNDP JPO Service Centre

“Results” of the first JPO questionnaire

Introduction

The Junior Professional Officer (JPO) Service Centre is an outposted branch of the UNDP’s Office of Human Resources. At the time this questionnaire was distributed, it administered some 255 JPOs working for the following UN agencies: UNDP and its affiliated funds /programmes (UNCDF, UNIFEM, UNV), UNFPA, UNIDO and UNOPS. The current JPOs are sponsored by 17 countries¹ and serve in some 85 duty stations worldwide.

On the occasion of the relocation of the JPO Service Centre to the premises of the UN/UNDP Nordic Office in July-2001, and in line with the UN reform and the UNDP change process, several initiatives have been undertaken to reform the Service Centre. It is envisaged that the Service Centre will become a “one-stop-shop”, covering the whole range of issues relating to JPO human resources, finance, travel, etc. The programme thus aims at streamlining work processes and procedures and at greatly reducing response time. The ultimate objective remains to better serve and support the JPOs, who are making a sizeable contribution to the UN community’s effort aimed at creating enabling environment for sustainable human development. The launch of a JPO resource website and the computerisation of the JPO offer package are just two examples of the changes currently underway.

In order to evaluate the needs and expectations of the JPOs with regard to the JPO Programme in general and the JPO Service Centre in particular, a comprehensive questionnaire was sent to all current JPOs at the end of September 2001. The present paper represents the synthesis of the answers obtained as well as the analysis of its key results. This document will be disseminated to all the stakeholders – JPOs, donors, country offices and Headquarters’ regional bureaux. It goes without saying that all the questionnaires received will be kept in the strictest confidence so as not to reveal individual opinions and observations.

It is planned that a revised questionnaire (based, *inter alia*, on the JPO’s suggestions) will be distributed on an annual basis to ensure that the JPO Service Centre is kept abreast of all the major developments that have a bearing on the performance and well-being of the JPOs as well as to solicit feedback regarding the recent track record of the JPO Service Centre itself as seen through the eyes of the JPO population².

¹ Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. Ireland and the Republic of Korea also participate in the Programme but are not funding any JPOs at the moment. However, two Irish JPOs have been selected and are expected to commence their assignments in January 2002.

³ In order to measure the impact of the anticipated improvements in the performance of the JPO Service Centre, it is also planned to circulate in September 2002 a partnership survey, which will enable the country

Timeframe

The JPO Service Centre team came up with the draft questionnaire in mid-September 2001. It was disseminated for comments/suggestions to all the UNDP Resident Representatives and UN Resident Coordinators. A substantial number of replies was received, welcoming the initiative and making observations as to how some of the questions could be refined. The final questionnaire was sent by e-mail to all current JPOs administered by the JPO Service Centre (i.e., JPOs from UNCDF, UNDP, UNFPA, UNIDO, UNIFEM, UNOPS and UNV) on 27 September 2001. A very tight deadline for answers was set at 20 October 2001.

The comprehensive analysis of the questionnaires and synthesis of the data were undertaken in the ensuing couple of weeks. The present document represents a summary of the outcome of this analysis process. The first presentation of the results took place on 6 November 2001, in conjunction with the official inauguration of the JPO Service Centre in Copenhagen.

General results: participation rate

Global participation (133/255)	52.2 %	³
By agency:		
- UNDP/UNCDF/UNIFEM/UNV: (97/189)	51.3 %	(- 00.9)
- UNFPA (22/37)	59.5 %	(+ 07.3)
- UNIDO (1/5)	20.0 %	(- 32.2)
- UNOPS (8/24)	33.3 %	(- 18.9)
- Anonymous: 5 answers		

A participation rate of 40 to 50 % would have been considered acceptable for this first questionnaire. The actual participation rate reached 52.2 % - slightly above our expectations. Nevertheless, the “abstention rate” is not insignificant. Four non-exhaustive explanations can be advanced:

- Very short timeframe for the exercise. It is believed that many JPOs simply didn't have time to reply to the questionnaire or were away from their offices on leave or official business. The workload/ absences problem can be partially

offices and the donor countries to assess the JPO Service Centre's “first year performance” and exchange ideas as to how the client-service delivery can be further enhanced.

⁴ Unfortunately, we were not in a position to include the delayed replies (those received after 1 November 2001) for the purpose of this paper. The inclusion of these responses would have increased the participation rate to almost 55%. However, we analysed these questionnaires just as carefully as those received on time.

resolved by allowing more response time in future (for instance, six weeks instead of three) and by improving and simplifying the format of the questionnaire.

- Some recently-appointed JPOs felt that they were not yet in a position to provide replies as their experience had been insufficient to warrant participation. We received quite a few messages to that effect.
- JPOs in some duty stations experienced difficulties accessing electronic mails or never received the questionnaire in the first place. This situation should improve in the years to come given the fact that UNDP devotes a great deal of attention to investments in the ICT domain.
- Sub-par interest on the part of some JPOs and/ or lack of trust concerning its intended use. Such a problem can only be mitigated through progressive development of confidence and partnership links between all JPOs and the JPO Service Centre.
- The fourth point above could perhaps partially explain the somewhat lower participation rate registered with regard to UNIDO and UNOPS JPOs. The JPO Service Centre is considered by some as a merely UNDP-oriented entity. At the same time, it must be said that more than a “fair share” of UNFPA JPOs chose to participate.

General results: breakdown by agency

JPO Programme –breakdown by agency

- Global (255/255)	100.0 %
- UNDP/UNCDF/UNIFEM/UNV (189/255)	74.1 %
- UNFPA (37/255)	14.5 %
- UNIDO (5/255)	2.0 %
- UNOPS (24/255)	9.4 %

Participation - breakdown by agency

- Global (133/133)	100.00 %	
- UNDP/UNCDF/UNIFEM/UNV (97/133)	72.9 %	(- 1.2)
- UNFPA (22/133)	16.8 %	(+ 2.0)
- UNIDO (1/133)	0.8 %	(- 1.2)
- UNOPS (8/133)	6.0 %	(- 3.4)
- Anonymous (5/133)	3.8 %	-----

The participation rate disparities between the agencies are smoothed in the final repartition of the answers between agencies, because of the considerable number of JPOs working for UNDP or an affiliated Fund/Programme.

This final breakdown reveals, however, the somewhat lower participation of UNIDO and UNOPS JPOs and highlights below-average participation rate in respect of UNDP JPOs.

It is also worth mentioning that 5 questionnaires (representing some 4 % of the answers and 2% of the total number of JPOs) were anonymous. This may have some impact on the ratios stated in various parts of this paper.

General results: distribution by gender

Distribution by gender

	JPO Programme	Questionnaire	Difference
- Males	(115/255) 45 %	(55/133) 41 %	- 4
- Females	(140/255) 55 %	(73/133) 55 %	---
- Anonymous	(000/255) 0 %	(05/133) 4 %	+ 4

General results: distribution by region

JPO Programme – distribution by region of assignment

- Global (255/255)	100.0 %
- Africa (76/255)	29.8 %
- Arab States (18/255)	07.1 %
- Asia-Pacific (70/255)	27.5 %
- Eastern Europe and the CIS (8/255)	03.1 %
- Headquarters location (48/255)	18.8 %
- Latin America and the Caribbean (35/255)	13.7 %

Participation - distribution by region of assignment

- Global (133/133)	100.0 %	
- Africa (40/133)	30.1 %	+ 0.3
- Arab States (15/133)	11.3 %	+ 4.2
- Asia-Pacific (36/133)	27.1 %	- 0.4
- Eastern Europe and the CIS (3/133)	2.3 %	- 0.8
- Headquarters location (16/133)	12.0 %	- 6.8
- Latin America and the Caribbean (17/133)	12.8 %	- 0.9
- Anonymous (5/133)	3.8 %	+ 3.8

No sizeable differences can be noticed, apart from the lower participation rate of the JPOs posted to Headquarters locations (Bonn, Brussels, Copenhagen, Geneva and New York) and the relatively higher participation of the JPOs based in the Arab States.

General results: distribution by Entry on Duty

Distribution by entry on duty date

	JPO Programme	Questionnaire	Difference
- 1996-1998	(29/255) 11 %	(10/133) 8 %	- 3
- 1999	(80/255) 31 %	(32/133) 24 %	- 7
- 2000	(89/255) 35 %	(49/133) 37 %	+ 2
- 2001	(57/255) 23 %	(37/133) 28 %	+ 5
- Anonymous		(05/133) 4 %	+ 4

General results: distribution by donor country

Distribution by donor country

	JPO Programme	Questionnaire	Difference
- Global	(255/255) 100 %	(133/133) 100 %	-----
- Austria	(08/255) 3.1 %	(05/133) 3.8 %	+ 0.7
- Belgium	(10/255) 3.9 %	(05/133) 3.8 %	- 0.1
- Canada	(05/255) 2.0 %	(03/133) 2.3 %	+ 0.3
- Denmark	(49/255) 19.2 %	(23/133) 17.3 %	- 1.9
- Finland	(12/255) 4.7 %	(04/133) 3.0 %	- 1.7
- France	(22/255) 8.6 %	(13/133) 9.8 %	+ 1.2
- Germany	(15/255) 5.9 %	(03/133) 2.3 %	- 3.6
- Italy	(11/255) 4.3 %	(07/133) 5.3 %	+ 1.0
- Japan	(30/255) 11.8 %	(12/133) 9.0 %	- 2.8
- Luxembourg	(08/255) 3.1 %	(04/133) 3.0 %	- 0.1
- the Netherlands	(26/255) 10.2 %	(18/133) 13.5 %	+ 3.3
- Norway	(16/255) 6.3 %	(08/133) 6.0 %	- 0.3
- Portugal	(01/255) 0.4 %	(00/133) 0.0 %	- 0.4
- Spain	(17/255) 6.7 %	(10/133) 7.5 %	+ 0.8
- Sweden	(20/255) 7.8 %	(11/133) 8.4 %	+ 0.6
- Switzerland	(04/255) 1.6 %	(02/133) 1.5 %	- 0.1
- the United Kingdom	(01/255) 0.4 %	(00/133) 0.0 %	- 0.4
- Anonymous		(05/133) 3.8 %	+ 3.8

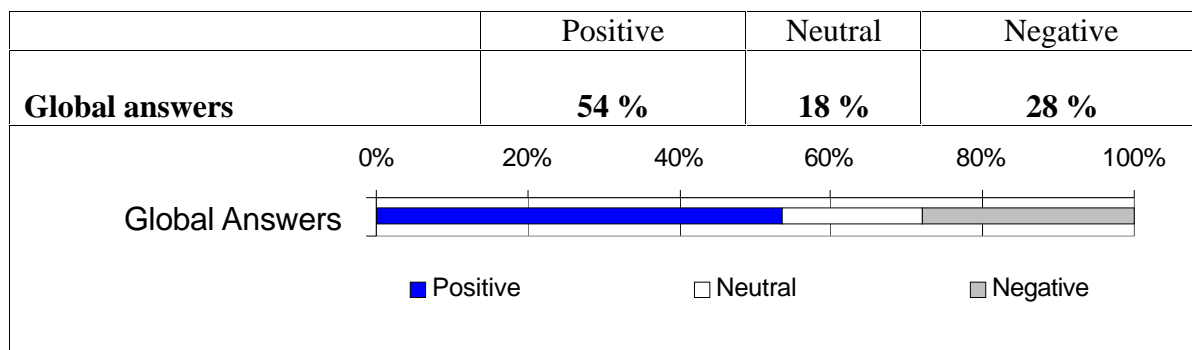
Detailed results of the questionnaire

- 1. To what extent were you satisfied with the information and services provided by the JPO Service Centre in the course of your recruitment, up to and including your entry of duty?**

Results

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Extremely dissatisfied
Global (133 answers)	10 % (13)	44 % (59)	18 % (24)	26 % (34)	2 % (3)

Summary



Comments

Apart from UNOPS JPOs, who would appear to be more dissatisfied than others by the length of the recruitment period, no strong differences between the agencies are noticeable. However, approximately one JPO out of four offered mainly negative comments with regard to the quality of services delivered in this respect by the JPO Service Centre. Additionally, several positive answers contained suggestions as to how the services should be further improved.

The recruitment and assignment period is very “delicate”, as it often entails resignation from the former job, a house move and various administrative or financial activities. Several negative remarks focussed on the Laissez-Passer and shipment-related issues.

In general terms, delayed responses and lack of unambiguous advice during the period between the official acceptance of the position and the arrival at the duty station have led to critical observations. One JPO mentioned: *“It was very long, all in all, I felt a bit alone during that time.”*

The difficulty to read and understand the recruitment package, containing a variety of the UN administrative documents, was also highlighted on several occasions. This point will

be ameliorated with the recently developed computerised offer package, that will be downloadable from the JPO Service Centre website.

54 % of positive replies is far from sufficient, but one can hope that this figure will rise in the near future owing to the efforts exerted by the JPO Service Centre to improve channels of communications with the current and forthcoming JPOs.

2. Do you think a reasonable period of time has elapsed between your acceptance of our offer of appointment and your arrival in the duty station?

Results

	Yes	No answer	No
Global (133 answers)	69 % (91)	0 % (1)	31 % (41)

Comments

According to the comments made by the JPOs, the period of time between the acceptance of the offer of appointment and the arrival in the duty station lasted between two and (in a few extreme cases) nine months. Though too short a period (less than two months) is not appreciated – applicants need sufficient lead time to settle various matters prior to their departure – a period of time in excess of four months is generally seen as excessive. This may be aggravated in those instances where JPOs feel insecure throughout such “in-between” periods because of the lack of timely replies from the JPO Service Centre.

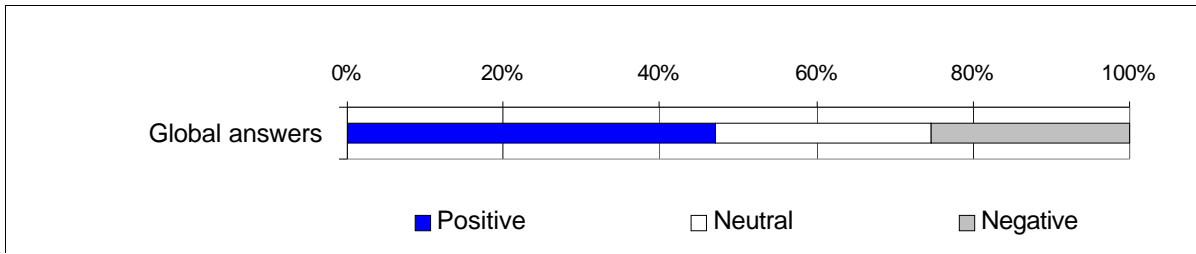
3. How would you rate the degree of logistical and substantive support provided by your duty station in the course of your “settling-in” period?

Results

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Extremely dissatisfied
Global (130 answers)	19 % (24)	29 % (39)	26 % (34)	19 % (24)	7 % (9)

Summary

	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Global answers	48 %	26 %	26 %



Comments

29% of the UNDP JPOs have rated negatively the degree of logistical and substantive support provided by the duty station at the initial phase of the appointment – compared to 14 % for UNFPA and 13 % for UNOPS JPOs. Similarly, 57 % of UNFPA JPOs and 74 % of UNOPS JPOs were satisfied by the support provided by the duty station – against 46 % with respect to UNDP JPOs. This difference can partially be explained by the smaller size of UNFPA and UNOPS country offices, which often allows JPOs to stay in closer contact with senior management and other colleagues.

Several comments were very negative: *“No support at all, even for catching me at the airport”, “Nothing was prepared: no computer for four months (...) A very discouraging start”, “If you wait for help, you can wait long”*. Other comments noted good logistical support but a deficient programming support.

Among the positive answers – 48 %, a score that leaves plenty of room for improvement – one can note the following comments: *“Welcoming team – Private office, computer and all equipment prepared – guidance provided for the first months”, “I received an induction course (meetings with persons from different units of the office) during the first weeks, and this has proved very helpful. Assistance in many practical matters. An overlapping period with my predecessor.”*

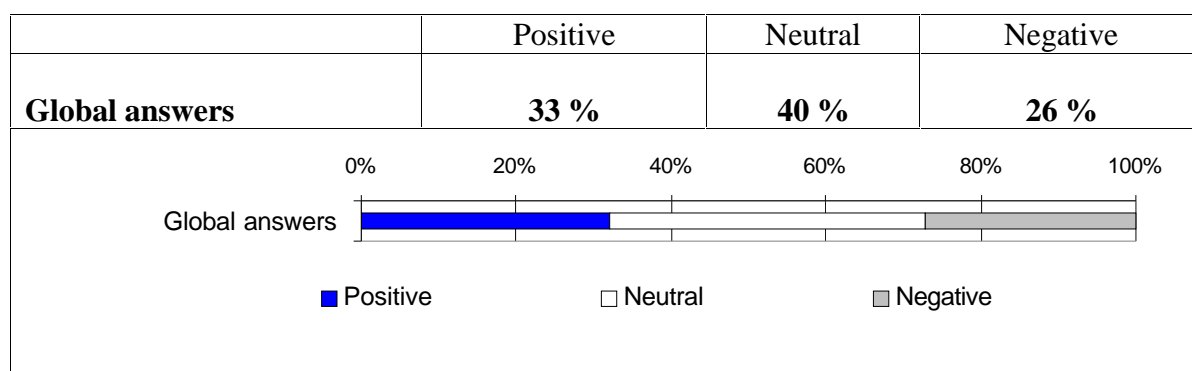
All in all, there is definitively a need for greater support during the settling-in period. It could be achieved by the creation of a JPO (or professional staff)-oriented country office welcome kit, the setting-up of JPO focal points in country offices (especially the large ones), provision of the orientation briefings and induction training courses and better co-ordination between the JPO Service Centre and the duty stations. A JPO-oriented website platform, providing practical and professional information on the duty stations could also be helpful.

4. How would you rate the degree of co-ordination between the JPO Service Centre and the administrative unit of your duty station?

Results

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Extremely dissatisfied
Global (126 answers)	6 % (8)	27 % (34)	40 % (50)	22 % (28)	4 % (5)

Summary



Comments

Though positive answers outnumbered the negative ones, only 33 % of the respondents consider the degree of co-ordination between the JPO Service Centre and the administrative unit of the duty station to be satisfactory.

Additionally, close to one JPO out of two stated that he/she was neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, commenting in many instances that they had no idea how the co-ordination was functioning, and if there was any co-ordination in place.

Frequently, positive answers have been offered without much comment, perhaps because one doesn't wish to make remarks when the required actions are undertaken in a satisfactory manner. Negative comments mainly put the emphasis on the lack of knowledge on the part of the duty stations' administrative unit with regard to the specifics of the JPO assignments. Several JPOs have encountered problems relating to rather basic issues such as payment of the settling-in grant, proper use of the budget allocated for travel and training or shipment-related entitlements. A significant proportion of the JPOs complained about the fact that the staff of the JPO Service Staff were not proactive in their approach. One JPO noted: *"I got the impression that our HR unit hasn't got a clue about what to do with JPOs; some fine-tuning between the JPO centre and our unit may prove useful."*

The need for the JPO Service Centre to better brief the administrative units of the duty stations is stated by the majority of the JPOs that have answered. The absence of clear administrative and financial guidelines concerning the specifics of the JPO assignments should be addressed to allow smoother integration of the JPOs in the duty station's team and to let the JPOs fully concentrate on their substantive tasks.

- 5. Have your original Terms of Reference been changed upon arrival, based on consultations with the CO management team, with a view to better matching your skills and competencies with the proposed job?**

Results

	Yes	No answer	No
Global (133 answers)	46 % (61)	4 % (5)	50 % (67)

Comments

The way this question was formulated does not facilitate analysis of the results⁴. Several JPOs answered “no” to this question because there was no need to redefine their Terms of Reference, as they were matching their competencies in the first place; whereas others answered “no” due to the fact that no action had been taken while the Terms of Reference had been deficient. Similarly, some JPOs answered “yes”, but mentioned that the new Terms of Reference did not match their competence but rather were intended to fill certain gaps in the country office.

When summarizing the comments, one can note that only one JPO out of two is satisfied with his/her current Terms of Reference. This figure is not satisfactory, as JPOs are supposed to be recruited on the basis of precise Terms of Reference in order to develop their experience in specific domains. One JPO thus stated: *“The TOR I received when I applied is not relevant for what I will be doing. It was written almost a year before I arrived and was therefore not up to date. I do though within the same department and field. There has not yet been enough time to thoroughly revise my TOR.”*

The preparation of more specific Terms of Reference by the country offices and a close supervision of their validity by the JPO Service Centre during the recruitment process could significantly improve the job satisfaction of the JPOs. But whatever the coordination between the two entities, the Terms of Reference should anyway be reviewed by senior management/supervisors and the JPO upon his/her arrival.

One can also state that following the reprofiling exercise conducted in UNDP country offices in 2001, several Terms of Reference have been revisited. The incumbent JPOs have often noted with satisfaction that their new Terms of Reference would enable them to focus more clearly on their professional tasks and alleviate the administrative burden.

6. Are your pre-employment skills and experience being utilized to your satisfaction?

Results

	Yes	No answer	No
Global (133 answers)	66 % (88)	4 % (6)	30 % (39)

Comments

⁴ Such key questions will of course have to be reformulated in future questionnaires.

In many instances, positive comments are very short, stating that everything is all right. However, several JPOs have noted that their responsibility was growing as they were gaining experience in the duty station. As for negative comments, they mainly concentrate on the lack of consideration of the country office management concerning their previous working experience.

Globally, one third of the JPOs that have answered believe that their skills and experience are not utilised to their satisfaction. This figure is a bit on the high side. It is felt that the number of negative replies could be lowered if the Terms of Reference had been more precisely defined. But once again, even if the Terms of Reference would seem to be perfectly fitting, it should not prevent JPOs from discussing with senior management upon arrival, the range of issues relating to their academic background and former work experience, in order to amend the Terms of Reference accordingly.

7. Have you acquired new skills on-the-job? (Please also state under comments what aspects of your work you find to be most and least rewarding from a professional standpoint.)

Results

	Yes	No answer	No
Global (133 answers)	83 % (110)	5 % (6)	12 % (17)

Comments

Many positive comments focussed on the acquisition of project/programme management skills: UN procedures, communication with donors and national partners, field visits, etc. But nearly all the comments on the least rewarding part of the work relate to overcomplicated and burdensome administrative procedures.. One comment received can summarise general feelings: *“The most satisfying part of my work is the contact with projects that I administer. The least: the time consuming bureaucracy.”*

Several comments also put the emphasis on the rewarding acquisition of new skills. One JPO noted: *“I have learned a lot about problem-solving. Due to the fact that I moved into an area that was completely new to me, I have gained a lot of knowledge within this field. Resource mobilisation is another area that I have found rewarding and the skills acquired in this field will useful to me in the future (...) The least rewarding part of my job has been processing duties”.*

More than four JPOs out of five consider that they are acquiring new skills – even though some believe that many newly acquired skills would become useless outside the UN System. This very good score shows the relevance of the JPO Programme, which was designed to help JPOs gain concrete knowledge and field experience, but could – and should – still be improved.

8. Do you have reasonably easy access to senior management when in need of advice and/ or guidance?

Results

	Yes	No answer	No
Global (133 answers)	87 % (116)	4 % (5)	9 % (12)

Comments

This very positive figure, similar for each agency, is supported by several positive remarks: “Senior management is very eager to give guidance”, “Senior management has always been exemplary”, etc.

Though affirmative, some comments also noted that senior management is often willing to provide support but is actually too overworked. Other comments made distinction between access and support: “Some of them pretend listening but actually don’t”, “Access is there, however, supervision or guidance is minimal or non-existent”.

Despite these nuances, the majority of the JPOs would appear to have reasonably unrestricted access to senior management and greatly appreciate, when in place, the open-door policies.

9. Do you get satisfactory support from your colleagues and supervisors?

Results

	Yes	No answer	No
Global (133 answers)	75 % (100)	4 % (5)	21 % (28)

Comments

Most of the JPOs are satisfied with the degree of support provided by their colleagues and supervisors. Besides, several JPOs answered “no” because the support was not systematic or came from just one of the two categories listed, but they problems didn’t seem to be acute. Several comments were enthusiastic and very positive. This good figure should however not hide the fact that some JPOs complained about what they perceive as mistrust and/ or envy on the part of the national officers in supervisory positions (JPOs are better paid, they are younger, etc.). Some also complained about the lack of or insufficient support from their direct supervisors. Such situations often leave the JPOS confused or demotivated. The JPO Service Centre clearly has a role to play here.

10. Are you satisfied with the level of decision-making authority you enjoy in your area of responsibility?

Results

	Yes	No answer	No
Global (133 answers)	64 % (85)	7 % (10)	29 % (38)

Comments

Close to two-thirds of the JPOs that have answered stated they are satisfied with the level of decision-making authority they enjoy. Quite often, comments linked to the “yes” answer are scarce, whereas negative comments are more developed. *“I am not really being challenged although I must say that perhaps part of the fault lies with myself: I should have been more demanding”*; *“There is a whole grey area between what I can do and what I cannot do (...) In an ideal situation, where supervision is appropriate, this grey area should be narrow. In my case it is much too broad.”* In many cases, comments focus on the hierarchical structure of the UN System and the lack of responsibility sharing.

JPOs also suffer from being younger than the average staff of a country office: it is sometimes more difficult for them to be considered by senior management as full-fledged professional officers and to adequate responsibilities. Besides, according to a few comments, some national officers are not very supportive towards young newcomers.

11. If feasible, would you be interested in extending your current JPO assignment?

Results

	Yes	No answer	No
Global (130 answers)	69 % (89)	9 % (13)	22 % (28)

Comments

Two trends are visible in the comments made. Several JPOs from those countries that are normally funding only two years of JPO-ship would be eager to extend their current JPO assignment. They deplore the situations where in their opinion their assignments are cut short due to non-substantive reasons, such as budgetary constraints of the sponsoring Governments. On the contrary, JPOs from those countries that fund three to four years of JPO-ship have often answered negatively to the question, or answered “yes”, but only in the event that they are re-assigned to another duty station. Three years of JPO-ship in a duty station seems thus to be an ideal period of time.

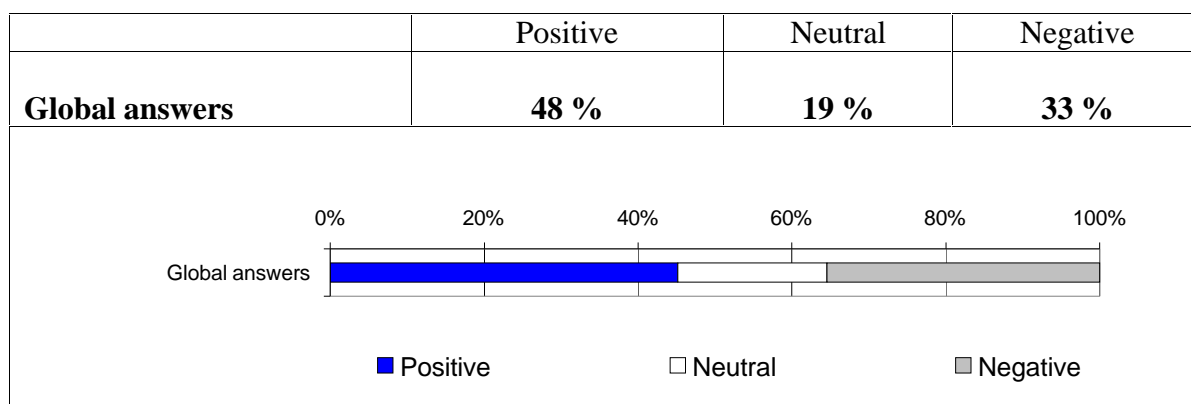
Two other qualitative remarks can be made. On the one hand, among the positive answers, some JPOs have notified that changes in their Terms of Reference or in management process were a *sine qua non* condition for extending their current assignment. But on the other hand, other JPOs have answered “no” to the question because they were approaching the end of their appointment period as a JPO. This question will therefore have to be reformulated in the next questionnaire.

12. If you were reassigned, to what extent were you satisfied with the information and services received from the JPO Service Centre on this occasion?

Results

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Extremely dissatisfied
Global (33 answers)	15 % (5)	33 % (11)	19 % (6)	27 % (9)	6 % (2)

Summary



Comments

Even though these figures do not concern all JPOs, they are far from satisfying. The reassignment process is maybe not as stressful as the first assignment, but it is often more complicated as it involves two country offices, the JPO Service Centre, the donor country and the JPO him/herself.

Positive comments focused on the roles that specific members of the JPO Service Centre team have played. They are in contrast with the negative comments that concentrated on the absence of in-process co-ordination between the JPO Service Centre and the Country Offices. The JPO Service Centre will have to take this point into consideration in order to improve the service provided.

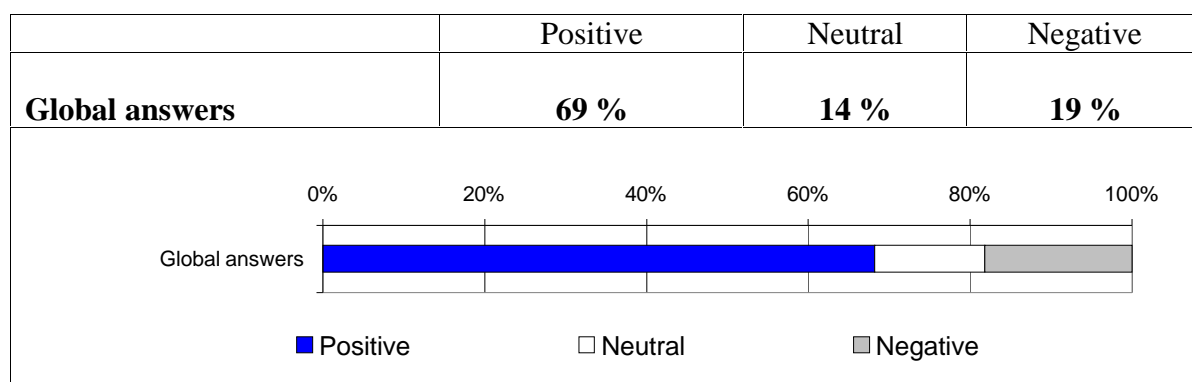
One can also note that several JPOs - from donor countries that normally fund only one assignment - have expressed strong interest in complementing the work experience gained in the first duty station with the one that can be obtained during the reassignment period.

13. When communicating with the JPO Service Centre, how would you rate the promptness and accurateness of our replies to your questions/concerns?

Results

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Extremely dissatisfied
Global (136 answers)	23 % (31)	46 % (62)	14 % (19)	13 % (18)	4 % (6)

Summary



Comments

Close to 70 % of the JPOs that have answered, representing more than one JPO out of three, are globally satisfied with the promptness and accurateness of replies provided by the JPO Service Centre. Though definitely positive, this score could undoubtedly be improved on. According to the JPOs, one of the main problematic issues is the lack of “stable” administrative counterparts: the turnover of the Human Resources Associates is considered as too frequent. In this regard, it is interesting to note that the JPOs that are very satisfied often commented they were/are having very good contact with their Human Resources Associates.

A significant proportion of the JPOs also noted in their comments that the quality of the services provided have improved since the relocation of the JPO Service Centre to Copenhagen. This trend is also confirmed by the results noted under question 14. Hopefully, the results of the next year’s questionnaire will further attest to the growing satisfaction of the JPOs towards the JPO Service Centre.

14. Have you noticed any changes to the quality of services delivered by the JPO Service Centre in the last couple of months?

Results

	Yes	No answer	No
Global (133 answers)	47 % (61)	8 % (10)	46 % (62)

Comments

This question should have been defined in more precise terms. Several JPOs answered “no” because they had not noticed any change whereas some answered negatively merely because they did not have the need to contact the JPO Service Centre in the last couple of months.

However, while examining the comments that most JPOs have provided, one can note that more than 20 % of the JPOs have not contacted the new JPO Service Centre yet, 35 % have stated that the quality of services has improved, 5 % felt that things were moving at a slower pace, 25 % answered “no” without comments and 15 % said “yes” without comments.

When provided, comments are generally very positive: “*Kindness, quickness, concerned, good orientations given*”, “*It seems things are moving faster and people pay more attention to their clients*” or “*Faster reply, friendlier service, thank you and keep up that work!*”. Such comments are numerous and prove that the JPO Service Centre is on the right track. Next year’s questionnaire will cater for the more precise assessment of this evolution. It will also have to take into account the suggestions made under question 15.

15. What are the three most important improvements you would like to see implemented by the JPO Service Centre?

Comments

One can break down the various answers, received in response to this question, in four main groups:

First of all, JPOs expect the JPO Service Centre to provide clear, prompt and accurate answers to their administrative and financial queries. One JPO thus noted: “*Respond to our emails would be a good start.*” This is an extreme example but it illustrates the importance of a smooth and speedy answering process. The JPO Service Centre has recently established a rule whereby all routine queries should be answered within an absolute maximum of 72 hours. Further surveys will hopefully confirm that thins are improving in this respect.

At the same time, the JPO Service Centre is expected to be much more than just an administrative management unit. As quoted by one JPO, it is expected to have a “*proactive attitude in terms of admin processes and provision of advice.*” Three key fields

of action/advice are highlighted: training opportunities, post-JPO employments opportunities, support for JPO networking. These three fields are in fact closely connected as they are based on information gathering and sharing. Through its website and other related activities, the JPO Service Centre will endeavour to respond to this obvious need.

Finally, JPOs expect the JPO Service Centre to tighten its relations and co-ordination with both donor countries and the duty stations. *“Experiences of JPO supervision in my agency have generally been very blended, i.e., both good and bad. While JPO Service Centre is thought as a support unit for JPOs, their supervisors should also benefit from the services with the aim at better training their JPOs.”* Such closer co-ordination among all the stakeholders would also be necessary with respect to the reassignment process. This requirement would seem to be even more relevant when it comes to UNFPA JPOs, some of which consider the JPO Service Centre to be too UNDP-oriented.

16. When you encounter serious problems of personal or professional nature, which “outside-of-the-office” entity would you be more likely to contact first?

Results

	The JPO Service Centre	No answer	Your sponsoring Government
Global answers (148 answers)	55 % (81)	10 % (16)	35 % (51)

Comments

More than “a fair share” of answers was received to this question, as several JPOs stated that they would contact both authorities at the same time. One can also note that the answers vary according to the agencies.

Distinctions were drawn between administrative/financial issues (the JPO Service Centre would then be contacted) and personal issues (Government is more likely to be contacted first). Besides, several JPOs stipulated that they would first try to deal with the issue internally, without contacting the JPO Service Centre or the sponsoring Government. But the diversity of the comments provided clearly indicates that JPOs are more willing to contact persons they know and trust most (either a Human Resources Associate or a Government official) rather than a specific administration.

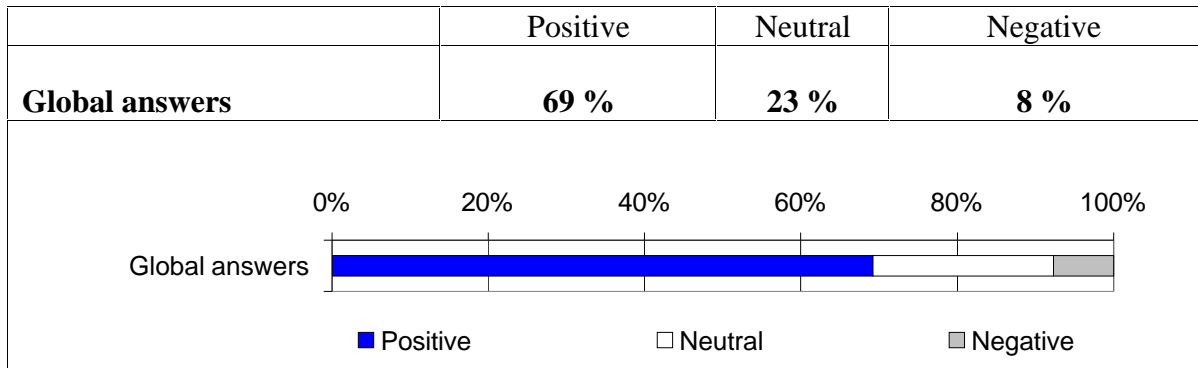
17. If your separation formalities have begun, to what extent are you satisfied with the information and services received from the JPO Service Centre?

Results

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Extremely dissatisfied

Global (13 answers)	31 % (4)	38 % (5)	23 % (3)	8 % (1)	0 % (0)
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Summary



Comments

This question only concerned a few JPOs but the answers are globally positive, though some JPOs commented that the administrative process was too long. It should progressively be shortened as, since 31 August 2001, the JPO Service Centre took over handling of new separation cases. The Human Resources Associates will thus “follow” JPO cases from the moment the offer of appointment is made until such time as the final separation entitlement is paid. Such a policy is part of the progressive transformation of the JPO Service Centre into becoming a one-stop shop for all administrative matters concerning JPOs.

18. When did you attend the JPO training course?

	UNDP/UNCDF/UNIFEM/UNV/ UNOPS training course	UNFPA training course
November 1997	2	
December 1998	1	
Jan.-Feb. 1999	3	
May 1999	6	
July 1999	4	
Sept.-Oct. 1999	4	1
November 1999	5	
January 2000	5	1
March 2000	5	
May 2000	5	
July 2000	10	1
Sept.-Oct. 2000	5	7
February 2001	12	
April 2001	8	
July 2001	8	8
Not yet	21	4

Total	104	22
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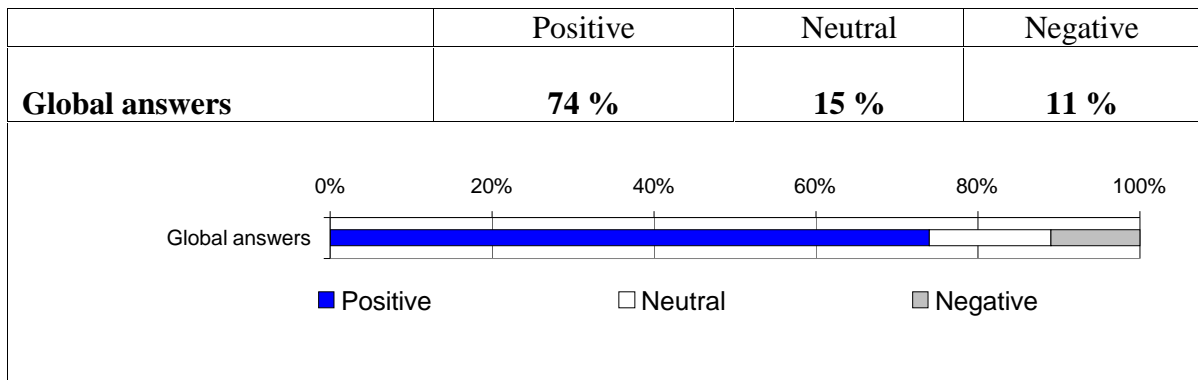
(Note: plus 4 blank answers and 3 affirmative but without date answers.)

19. To what extent were you satisfied with the Training Course?

Results

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Extremely dissatisfied
Global (104 answers)	20 % (21)	54 % (56)	15 % (16)	9 % (9)	2 % (2)

Summary



Comments

This global positive figure is commendable. However, there is a noticeable difference between the training course organised for UNDP and UNOPS JPOs (68 % of positive answers) and the UNFPA training course (100 % of positive answers). This difference can be partially explained with the analysis of question 20.

20. What were the most positive and the most negative aspects?

The homogeneity of the answers received to this question is very important.

The following positive aspects can be found in most answers: the training course enables young professionals to meet fellow JPOs, share substantive or administrative experiences (both good and bad), get together with counterparts at Headquarters, better understand the UN system and visit the UN Headquarters premises. It is also worth mentioning that most

UNFPA JPOs commended the integrated and programmatic approach of their training course.

The negative aspects of the training course differ from agency to agency. UNDP and UNOPS JPOs have expressed their concern with regard to the quality of some lectures, as well as the tight timeframe. Too many subjects are dealt with in too short a period and no in-depth study is thus possible. At the same time, the programming aspects are mostly omitted and the disparities between the backgrounds and positions of the JPOs are not sufficiently taken into account.

Most negative comments from UNFPA JPOs focus on the joint UNDP/UNFPA training course part, which is considered irrelevant (too UNDP-oriented and vague). One can also add that a few UNOPS JPOs criticised what they described as lack of respect on the part of some UNDP staff towards UNOPS JPOs.

21. Please state your preference as to the venue of the training course:

Results

	New York only	Mainly in New York, but with a few days in Copenhagen to get to know the JPOSC staff	Mainly in Copenhagen, but with a few days in NY to get to know the HQ staff	Copenhagen only
Global (123 answers)	38 % (47)	51 % (63)	9 % (11)	2 % (2)

Comments

89 % of the answers targeted New York as the only or main training course venue: the importance for the JPOs of meeting staff from Headquarters and to have a look around the UN premises should not be underestimated. JPOs want to be recognised as regular UN staff and the training course is considered as a great opportunity to melt in the “UN family”.

Several comments suggested that staff from the JPO Service Centre should be present in New York during part of the training session: the importance of meeting the Human Resources Associates in person has been emphasised. Several JPOs also worried about the financial cost of travelling to Copenhagen.

One JPO stated: *“Of course, all of us would prefer to travel to New York and Copenhagen. Seriously, maybe the best option would be to send people out through Copenhagen, before COs, in order to receive a general briefing, including administrative issues, security, receive the most important manuals etc. Then the New York could be 3-6 months later, as now, but be more thematic and go deeper in the issues...”*

The financial and timing aspects will indeed have to be discussed with the donor countries before making any changes.

22. Would you be interested in participating in regional workshops organized by the JPO Service Centre in order to exchange ideas, share concerns etc?

Results

	Yes	No answer	No
Global (133 answers)	89 % (118)	2 % (4)	9 % (11)

Comments

Most of the comments were enthusiastic and focussed on the strong need for such initiatives. One JPO thus stated: *“I believe interaction with other JPOs is one of the most fruitful ways of generating new ideas and establishing cross-country/sector networks.”* The thematic approach was emphasised and several JPOs also offered to become regional focal points for the organisation of the regional workshops.

The organisation of JPO regional workshop would require the support of both the donor countries and the UN country offices, as administrative and financial modalities have to be further discussed. But such events would indeed be a plus in the strengthening of a JPO-network and the experience-sharing process.

23. Would you be interested in receiving regular “JPO-oriented” news? In what format?

Results

	Yes	No answer	No
Global (133 answers)	95 % (126)	1 % (2)	4 % (5)

Comments

The results are self-explanatory. More than 80% of the respondents suggested that the newsletter should be sent by e-mail. Some also opined that the distribution should be in the form of a digest, providing links to relevant information on the forthcoming JPO website. Most JPOs recommended that the periodicity of newsletters should be either one issue every two months, monthly or weekly (in which case it should be very short).

Comments and expectations will be taken into account by the JPO Service Centre in order to create a practical and readable JPO-oriented newsletter.

24. Would an “on-line JPO resource centre (web-site, forum, chatroom)” be of interest to you?

Results

	Yes	No answer	No
Global (133 answers)	87 % (115)	5 % (6)	8 % (12)

Comments

Figures are overwhelmingly supportive of the idea. One JPO’s comment can summarise the general feeling: *“It [an on-line JPO resource centre] is not just of interest. It is essential if you want to be relevant.”*

Anticipating this need, the JPO Service Centre developed in October 2001 the first version of a dedicated JPO resource website, which is meant to become a platform for covering all aspects of the JPO Programme: administration (on-line documentation and forms), networking (JPO forum, newsletter, JPO net), resource centre (thematic and national approaches), participating countries and UN agencies, etc. The website is also intended to be a living tool, evolving following the JPOs’ and other stakeholders’ suggestions and inputs.

The first version of the JPO Service Centre website was officially launched on 6 November 2001 and is now accessible at the following addresses: <http://www.jposc.org> or <http://www.jposc.dk>

25. Would you be interested in joining / participating in a JPO association, potentially bringing together current and former JPOs?

Results

	Yes	No answer	No
Global (133 answers)	84 % (111)	7 % (9)	9 % (13)

Comments

The results reflect once again a very strong interest on the part of the JPO community in the initiative that is meant to facilitate and strengthen the networking between both current and former JPOs, some of which could eventually become mentors/supporters of the JPO Programme. Various answers emphasised the relevance of such an association for the post-JPO employment opportunities. It is also expected to contribute to the UN reform process. One UNDP JPO thus stated: *“As incumbent JPOs have fresh ideas, an unbiased approach and new energy, their intellectual inputs should be shared not only amongst other JPOs but with top UNDP management as well”*.

But while being very enthusiastic, several JPOs emphasized the requirement of having preliminary discussions with regard to the format and modalities of the association. One UNFPA JPO noted that an association is a good idea “*only if it’s not totally UNDP JPO oriented and if non-UNDP JPOs are welcome*”.

The creation of a JPO association cannot be created *ex nihilo*: the initiative and modalities have to emanate from the JPOs themselves. The JPO Service Centre website will hopefully become a key forum enabling the creation of a JPO “alumni association” in the not-too-distant future.

26. Do you believe that your involvement in the JPO programme enhances your career prospects?

Results

	Yes	No answer	No
Global (133 answers)	89 % (119)	7 % (8)	4 % (5)

Comments

This was one of the key questions in the present questionnaire. The very positive figure above clearly demonstrates that the vast majority of the JPOs, though sometimes displeased by certain aspects of their work and thus making legitimate complaints/requests – such as being recognised as full professional staff or benefiting from smooth administrative support – consider their being a JPO as an important and often vital opportunity, especially when it comes to increasing their chances of embracing an international carrier. This certainly bodes well for the future of the JPO programme.

27. Do you think that a similar questionnaire should be sent to all JPOs on an annual basis?

Results

	Yes	No answer	No
Global (133 answers)	87 % (116)	4 % (5)	9 % (12)

Comments

Close to 90 % of the respondents agree that a similar questionnaire be sent on an annual basis, but several comments noted that the modalities should be different. The creation of more clustered chapters (entry on duty, training course, reassignment, etc.) that would

have to be filled only once during a JPO period and the definition of refined questions/revised layout is undoubtedly needed.

It is therefore suggested that all willing JPOs contribute to the preparation of the forthcoming questionnaire, through the medium of web or e-mail discussions. Besides, some answers to specific questions of the questionnaire can be further analysed or become forum discussion topics, depending on the JPOs' initiatives.

Last but not least, several JPOs thanked the JPO Service Centre for having sent this questionnaire. Taking into consideration the feelings and requests of the JPOs is indeed a key factor for the achievement of the goals of the JPO Programme and one can hope that such a questionnaire will prove, through the years, to be an important tool for monitoring and evaluation of the programme.