

Create a Positive Environment

Create a positive environment that fosters continuous learning. A safe and supportive environment nurtures learning and motivates UN Volunteers to effectively engage to achieve results. Take inspiration from these best practices to help them reach their full potential.

Activities	Description
Create a safe and inclusive environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the code of conduct and acceptable and expected workplace behaviour • Ensure everyone has completed the mandatory training and reiterate zero tolerance of sexual exploitation and abuse, sexual harassment, and abuse of authority • Be inclusive and fair to all, irrespective of their gender, race, religion, orientation, or rank • Have an open door and act upon any concerns or complaints
Facilitate open communication	Open communication and information sharing with UN Volunteers helps create an atmosphere of trust. Knowledge sharing increases exposure to areas beyond their activities and ignites ideas and innovation. From lunches or monthly meetings with senior managers, to feedback and virtual sharing of ideas, express your openness to hear from those on the frontline.
Recognize that learning happens through work activities	Learning happens all the time, not just through classroom or online training. Enable learning opportunities for UN Volunteers through education, experience, and exposure.
Provide access to resources and information	Include UN Volunteers in your department's learning and development plan. Empower them with equal access to host entity resources, including learning platforms and development opportunities.
Understand that mistakes are part of the learning process	Explain that it's ok to make mistakes – it's how you value learning. Discuss and allow reflection and learning from the situation. Fear of making mistakes will lead to stagnation.
Provide learning time	Provide the necessary time and space, away from interruptions, to learn and reflect. It will help enhance efficiency and productivity.
Motivate continuous learning	Motivate UN Volunteers to acquire relevant skills. Encourage them with praise and commendations from immediate supervisors. Provide opportunities to lead projects or task forces.
Guide learning	Support UN Volunteers to align their learning with their immediate responsibilities, intermediate development, and future growth.
Support transfer of skills at the workplace	UN Volunteers bring transferable knowledge and skills and acquire others during their assignment. Provide opportunities to apply and retain learning through projects and capacity development of others. Competencies are developed through a repeated cycle of learn-practice-reflect.
Encourage new ideas and innovation	UN Volunteers bring a diversity of experiences and ideas that can stimulate innovation. Encourage them to share feedback and ideas early on. The longer you wait, the faster they will forget transferable knowledge and skills.
Establish a sense of direction	Explain to UN Volunteers what is expected of them and the areas in which they can take initiative and experiment. Clarify how their work fits into the bigger picture and what can make a difference.

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Enable connections with people and networks	UN Volunteers are often based at the nexus of host entities, communities and partners. Encourage them to get connected with people and groups outside their immediate circle for new ideas and solutions.
Form cross-functional teams to create knowledge	Include UN Volunteers in cross-functional taskforces and provide stretch assignments with other teams. The diversity of backgrounds, experiences and skills can accelerate creativity, problem-solving and knowledge creation.
Offer and seek feedback	Regular feedback, both positive and constructive, is key to a culture of continuous learning. It reinforces positive behaviour, provides focus and solutions, and drives volunteer engagement and performance.