

## JPO Story: Working on Development Planning in Guinea-Bissau.



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### Background

I studied Political Science and International Relations, followed by a European Master's Degree in Human Rights and Democratization. Before becoming a JPO, I worked for the Australian Embassy in Portugal and for the Portuguese Development Agency in Timor-Leste and Mozambique. Since I graduated, I have been involved in volunteering activities in Portugal, Angola and Brazil aiming at raising awareness amongst young people on world inequalities and the need to promote sustainable development.

### Assignment

Since September 2017, I am a Programme Analyst for Development Planning and Aid Coordination with the Strategic and Policy Unit at UNDP in Guinea-Bissau, which ranks 177th out of 189 countries on the Human Development Index. My tasks include prioritizing, accelerating and mainstreaming the SDGs into the Guinea-Bissau national development plan, fostering SGD advocacy and compliance in the country, implementing the New Deal for Fragile States, supporting Effective Development Cooperation, establishing effective aid coordination mechanisms in Guinea-Bissau, and promoting South-South and Triangular Cooperation. I contribute to reinforcing the capacity of the officers working on these issues at the Ministry of Economy and Finances and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. On the promotion of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, I liaise not only with the Government, but also with civil society and the private sector.

Supporting Guinea-Bissau to align its national development plan and mainstream the SDGs into it as well as other international agendas to which Guinea-Bissau has adhered to, was the most challenging project I have worked on because of the number of people involved from all sectorial areas. It was a participatory process that involved almost 70 people from the ministries and public institutes, civil society, private sector as well as all UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes present in the country including UNIOGBIS – the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau.



The contact with local stakeholders, beneficiaries and local culture is the most rewarding aspect of being in the field. Working with and learning from colleagues from UNDP and other UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes and UNIOGBIS, who all have such different backgrounds and previous experiences, has been an extremely rewarding experience. In addition, in a not so big Country Office like Guinea-Bissau, you have the opportunity to work in a variety of issues and therefore learn more, which from my perspective has been an added-value in these almost two years here.

Working as a JPO in UNDP in Guinea-Bissau has allowed me to learn considerably through hands-on experience on the SDGs in a fragile country context, which will certainly be a great asset for my future career within the UN. I have learned in practice that the 2030 Agenda, being crosscutting, has the potential to promote sustaining peace and boost inclusive economic, political and environmental development in a country.

### Advice to prospective candidates

Arrive to your duty station with an open mind, learn as much as possible, gain trust from colleagues, be proactive, and if possible, focus in an area you like to work in. Also, be prepared for cultural differences that might impact your work. In Guinea-Bissau for instance, things may take longer than you initially expect, so flexibility is key. Above all, always remain inspired and willing to inspire others. We are contributing to eradicate poverty, promote sustainable development and increase resilience to crisis!

