

JPO story: working on South-South Cooperation and Global Development.



Inspecting the construction site for the Mini-Hydro Power Plant in Serenje, Zambia, together with the Director of Training, Mr. Brian Makungo

Peter Morling is a Danish sponsored JPO, working on South-South cooperation and Global Development Cooperation in UNDP China.

Background

I hold a Masters degree in International Business and Politics from Copenhagen Business School. What made me want to apply for the JPO programme was the desire to be part of a larger organization that works towards sustainable development and making a difference for people in need. This brings a sense of purpose to a day-to-day working life.

Furthermore, I understood that the JPO programme would be an accelerated learning journey that would enhance and test my skill-set, and provide a good entry point for a career in the UN System. I have not been disappointed.

Assignment

I am a JPO in UNDP China's South-South and Global Development Cooperation team. We focus on China's global engagements, which is scaling up significantly these years, primarily due to the launch of the USD 3 billion South-South Cooperation Assistance Fund (SSCAF). Our team facilitates access between UNDP Country Offices and SSCAF, why we work much like a liaison office to the Chinese Government. In 2018, I was part of facilitating 16 projects to SSCAF, which gave me a diverse insight to project development and the Chinese approach to development cooperation through the multilateral system.

I am also project manager for two Trilateral Projects on Renewable Energy Technology Transfer (RETT) between China, Ghana and Zambia (funded by the Government of Denmark) as well as China, Ethiopia and Sri Lanka (funded by the Government of China). These projects are hands on and have been a steep learning curve in project management and coordination of culturally diverse stakeholders. The China-Ghana-Zambia RETT project is coming to an end this year, while the China-Ethiopia-Sri Lanka RETT project is in its inception, which has given me deep insight to the full project management cycle of UNDP and very hectic days in the office.



Opening remarks at the South-South Cooperation Low Carbon Forum in Changsha, Hunnan Province, China

The people I met during my assignment in China and the countries I work with, have without a doubt been the most rewarding experience to date. I have gotten a better understanding of Chinese culture, which I would not have been able to get elsewhere. I have also been thrilled to be able to take advantage of the many exciting opportunities UNDP has to offer. I am for instance able to do a detail assignment to UNDP Ethiopia to set up a project there and I am the Innovation Focal Point in my team, which, for me combines a passion with work. Most of my work I find to be positively challenging, especially being part of a SSCAF call for proposals, stands out. We were given a two-week window to submit 16 project concepts, which meant coordination with 16 Country Offices to develop these projects and linking them with Chinese partners to ensure appropriate South South exchange, while navigating changing requirements from SSCAF - as this was also their first call for proposals. It was non-stop work for two weeks.

Advice to prospective candidates

The JPO programme is rewarding and a unique opportunity to grow as a person and as a development practitioner. Granted, it has been quite challenging from time to time, but also extremely rewarding when you zoom out and realize the many experiences you have had in a short time span. I would highly advice future JPO's to be humble when taking up a new assignment as this helps you get better working relationships quickly, who will in turn help you grow.

