

HRM in the International Organizations

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Abbreviations

ASHI	After-employment safety and health care
CERN	Conseil Européen pour la Research Nucléaire
DfID	Department for International Development (UK)

This chapter has fewer citations and References because the subject of HRM in the IGOs has not been widely covered in the literature. However as the chapter notes many of the statements made here can be checked directly on the websites of the Organizations concerned.

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EPO	European Patents Office
EU	European Union
ECMWF	European Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting
Eurojust	European Judicial Cooperation Unit
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICTR	International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda
ICTY	International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IGO	Intergovernmental Organization
IIDEA	International Institute for democracy and Electoral Assistance
ILO	International Labour Office
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MNE	Multinational Enterprise
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
SCSL	Special Court for Sierra Leone
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

Introduction: Definitions

This chapter discusses HRM in the International Organizations or, as they are sometimes called, (IGOs),¹ thus neatly separating them from national governments and from Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). Many of the features of Human Resource Management(HRM) in the IGOs are shared with governments and

NGOs (see Chaps. [People Management in the Public Sector](#) and [People Management in Volunteer Organizations and Charities](#)), and some of the international aspects are shared with private MultiNational Enterprises (MNEs), but the unusual combination of government and internationalism provides the IGOs with a unique context and a unique set of issues in HRM. Put simply, the combination means that to understand HRM in the IGOs, you have to understand the corporate governance of these bodies.

In IGOs, the typical HRM requirements of cost-effectiveness and future planning are carried out in an intensely political environment. For most inter-governmental organizations, national laws and regulations do not apply because of diplomatic immunity: By international agreement, they operate in extra-jurisdictional territory and their laws and regulations are defended by the Tribunal of Administrative Justice and the International Labor Law Tribunal. Accountability and ‘paper-trails’ impose a very high level of bureaucracy. Employees are multilingual and come from a variety of nations with no one pre-dominant, and almost every manager is managed by and in turn manages someone from a different culture than themselves.

This chapter defines the IGOs, offers a commentary on some of their context and their governance, and then shows how that plays out in the management of human resources within such organizations.

The Corporate Governance of IGOs

IGO are bodies set up by treaty between several national governments. Some of them, such as the United Nations or the World Bank, have a huge presence on the international stage, some are large regional organizations (the European Union), and others cover smaller regions (the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank) or are more localized or specialized and less well known. Some are not regional but coordinate countries that have historical (the Commonwealth) or linguistic (*Organization internationale de la Francophonie*) ties. Common to all these IGOs is that their founding treaty and, sometimes, subsequent amendments give them a mission which is about something other than making profits. The mission may be very broad (‘world peace,’

Table 1 Illustrations of IGOs

Organization	Focus	Headquarters	Employees
CERN	Science	Geneva	2400
ICC	Criminal court	The Hague	600
NATO (IS)	Military services	Brussels	1200
UN (plus)	World peace	New York	43,000
–UNICEF	Children	New York	8000
–WHO	Health	Part of UN	5500
–WFP	Humanitarian Aid	Part of UN	4200
–FAO	Food production	Part of UN	3300
–ILO	Labour Standards	Part of UN	2300
World Bank	Financial Services	New York	12,000

Sources <http://www.unsceb.org/content/hr-statistics-staff-by-organization>

‘ending world poverty’), or it may be very specific (the Universal Postal Union). Equally, the missions may be political (International IDEA aims to spread Western-style democracy), they may be military (the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, NATO), they may be legal (the International Criminal Court, ICC). Often their missions are extremely specialized (the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts, the ECMWF; the IAEA or International Atomic Energy Agency), leading them to employ some of the most highly qualified technical specialists in their field in the world. Others are more logistical or coordinating, so that most of their staff are generalists. For examples of IGOs see Table 1.

HRM Categorization of IGOs

IGOs can be clustered or categorized on the basis of several criteria including size (number of employees), organization age (based on the year of foundation), core activities, and degree of independence (e.g., Are they part of a parent organization or not?). On the basis of size, IGOs can be clustered in three groups:

1. Small IGOs with up to 500 employees (e.g., IFAD);
2. Medium-sized IGOs with 500–2000 employees (e.g., UNESCO);

3. Large IGOs with more than 2000 employees (e.g., the EU and the UN as a whole).

Some IGOs have a long tradition and were founded decades ago. The United Nations, for example, was founded in 1945 (the ILO was founded in 1919). Other IGOs are relatively young. ICC and Eurojust, for example, were founded less than two decades ago. The older IGOs have often gone through multiple transitions, organizational restructuring, and growth (e.g., in terms of the number of employees and the available budget). Budget increases and organizational growth are much rarer now following the global financial crisis and the worldwide governmental cuts in money for most IGOs (Brewster et al. 2013).

It is clear that the core activities of IGOs can be very different, although there is a substantial number focused on international humanitarian aid. Many of those IGOs are linked to the UN. Other IGOs focus on financial services (e.g., the World Bank and the IMF), military services (e.g., NATO), fundamental science (e.g., CERN), and international law (e.g., ICC, ICTY, ICTR, SCSL). The nature of the core activities of IGOs is also highly related to the type of professionals working in the organizations such as military personnel within NATO, lawyers and judges in international courts, and scientists within CERN. Managing these groups of professionals is in itself an HRM challenge for many IGOs given the specific professional norms and values related to these workers (Noordegraaf 2011).

Some IGOs operate more or less independently. CERN, for example, is funded directly by member states. Other IGOs operate under the umbrella of a parent organization. The European Union and the United Nations are both parent organizations for many IGOs. Eurojust employs 500 people, is located in the Hague, and is part of the EU. UNESCO employs 2000 people, has its headquarters in Paris, and is part of the UN. IGOs which are part of a parent organization are often heavily affected by top-down policies including HRM policies and practices (e.g., with regard to grading of jobs, recruitment, selection, appraisal, and rewards). Independent IGOs have more leeway in terms of strategic HRM decision making and HRM policies than IGOs that are part of a parent organization.

In summary, IGOs differ very much on the basis of their size, age, core activities, and degree of independence. And there are many more contextual factors, including the governance structure, the finance system, and the reputation of the organization, that affect the shaping of IGOs and their HRM in particular. Therefore, it makes sense to argue that there is 'no one size fits all' in the HRM of IGOs.

On the theme of variability within the category, some IGOs have stable staffing, while others have 'accordion' structures where they expand and decrease very fast depending on the nature of their operations (humanitarian, crisis management). Some have a general mandate and programs that open and close, while others have more long-term goals to achieve within a specific framework. Some are research oriented while others exist to harmonize conditions or practices within regions or globally. Some provide their constituencies with a platform to discuss economic, political, and social issues and act as a secretariat to their members. Some IGOs have very broad objectives and contain a variety of departments with different mandates and programs and, sometimes, different terms of contractual conditions, creating staff with different entitlements even though nominally serving within the same institution.

For nearly all IGOs, the most expensive item of operating costs, by a significant margin, is the cost of their people, their human resources. To manage an IGO cost-effectively means, almost inevitably, careful strategic management of the Organization's human resources. Thus, careful monitoring of human resource management becomes a key task for the governing bodies.

There seems to be an ever-increasing number of IGOs. This does not appear to be because they are an obviously excellent form of achieving governments' purposes: Indeed, various surveys, both governmental (DfID 2011) and more academic (Barnett and Finnemore 2004; Bauer and Weinlich 2011; Gutner and Thompson 2010; Young 1992), seem to indicate that, to put it gently, their performance record in terms of achieving their objectives is patchy. Although there have been, and will be, instances of IGOs closing their doors, in practice shutting down an IGO, either when it has achieved its mission and has no further purpose or when it has proven incapable of fulfilling its mission, is almost impossible (Schemeil 2013). Thus, for example, NATO, whose mission

was to counter the threat created by the communist Soviet Union, continues to have its mission redefined so that it stays in business, even though the communist Soviet Union no longer exists. Equally, organizations like the United Nations Economic, Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) whose mission is, even from its title, obviously broad, vague, and unclear and which has been much criticized in government reports (DfID 2011) as being inefficient and ineffective has had its resources cut, but continues to run its very expensive bureaucracy from its headquarters in Paris. Within the United Nations, peacekeeping operations are created and closed upon resolutions of the Security Council. These peacekeeping operations work with military and civil personnel and are highly complex in the logistical and political management. These institutions are often created in remote areas and their establishment has a significant impact on the territory hosting them. Operating in these settings exposes staff to safety and security concerns, and every year there are casualties among both military and civilian employees.

As governmentally established and controlled bodies, these resilient organizations are inherently political bodies. Furthermore, while there are many aspects of the management or activities of these structures that are subject to the treaty or are too complex for non-specialists to understand, the management of their own workforces is not one of them. Their HRM is, therefore, often subject to the close involvement of the member states and their representatives. Hence, the political context becomes significant in understanding not just their policies and actions, but also how they manage their workforce.

Hence, every one or 2 years IGOs have to provide their constituencies with a detailed budget of operations that include not only financial statements (with zero profit and in balance) but also a detailed staffing table for each of its activity as well as explications for deviations from previously agreed plans. These systems represent an old school of planning that makes it difficult for IGOs to respond effectively to changing circumstances or sudden events within the biennium. HRM becomes very complex as fixed rules and regulations, which do not allow for the flexibility required by the pace of demands and the consequent work changes, coexist alongside the informal variation required to achieve the

mission. The governance system and the necessary levels of transparency require significant time and resources to be devoted to close monitoring of financial and HRM issues. Furthermore, where IGOs have very broad missions (e.g., the UN) and contain de facto other 'mini-IGOs' within the same organizational structure, the challenge for HRM increases as policies have to be different depending on the working environment, creating very divergent HRM systems within the same structure and potentially conflicting interests among staff within the same organization. In general, the divergence of staff needs increases with the dispersion of staff and it is maximal when staff are operating in hardship duty stations in developing countries as compared to those who are comfortably sitting in pleasant locations in Europe or the USA.

The broad structure of these organizations—obviously details vary with the organization—is that they have senior executives appointed by vote or agreement between their member states. These intensely political appointments are the subject of extensive lobbying and national government pressure. Once appointed, usually to a fixed-term contract, they are responsible for both the policy of the organization and its bureaucracy—the employees who do the work necessary to achieve the organization's mission. They are, therefore, legally responsible for the human resource management within the organization, even if they have little interest or expertise in the subject. In most cases, the IGO Chief Executive appoints a head of administration to have delegated responsibility for these matters and, in turn, they will appoint a head of HRM (under many different titles) with a department that will at the least look after the terms and conditions and contractual arrangements for the organization. In general, even within any one IGO, certainly those of any significant size, there are subtle differences between different staff and different locations, with greater or lesser formal recognition of this fact. The consequence is the creation of different informal local practices to which (locally trained) HRM staff adhere.

Dispersing the accountability for HRM allows for decentralization; however, it also creates a substantial central monitoring effort to ensure compliance with rules and regulations in order to minimize the cost of legal disputes. This bureaucracy is charged with ensuring strategic human resource management but their scope for adaptation and change

is severely limited and for many managers and employees the system seems to be obsessed with ensuring that existing policies are adhered to—in the event it often seems as if the HRM department is enforcing a ‘straitjacket’ rather than a modern HRM strategy.

The staff in most of these organizations are directly employed, but some IGOs rely on other providers for much of their human resource. Thus, for example, in the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and NATO, the majority of their workforce is seconded from member states. The European Organization for Nuclear Research, known as CERN from its original initials in French, is ‘home’ to thousands of scientists seconded by governments, universities, and research laboratories and, therefore, not on the CERN payroll. Many of the Organizations use ‘consultants’ extensively. These are people employed on short-term contracts and therefore not counted on the Organization’s payroll. They are widely used for one of three (sometimes overlapping) purposes: To bring in skills, knowledge, or expertise that the Organization does not have among its current staff; to bring in necessary human resources to carry out projects not funded through the regular budget; or to hide expenditure on people needed to undertake the core mission. As a general rule, consultants are as often employed for finance-based reasons as for project-related ones. In more than one Organization that has proudly boasted of its ability to keep employment numbers under tight control, or even to reduce them, careful analysis by Independent External Evaluators has found that as the number of budgeted staff has reduced, so the number of unbudgeted consultants has increased. This is, to an extent, created by the lack of flexibility in reviewing organizational staffing according to rapidly changing circumstances as well as by the difference in recruitment for different categories. Staff brought in on budgeted posts have to undergo a very lengthy recruitment process (often lasting from 6 months to 1 year) while consultants’ recruitment is faster and can be done within a few weeks. However, this creates another ‘straitjacket’ as consultants cannot be considered for recruitment on budgeted posts. The consequence is IGOs often have two career paths: Career staff and consultants with different entitlements but working alongside each other often in the same office and often with same terms of references.

The structure of the governing bodies of these organizations varies, but is rarely conducive to good management and certainly not to good human resource management. Many of them are controlled by delegated experts from the member states, who understand the technical and now largely computer-driven work of medium-range weather forecasting, crop growth, or space exploration, for example, and come together at irregular intervals to oversee the work program of the IGO. Unless the organization is very unusual, the HRM interest, knowledge, or skill of these delegates is limited in the extreme. However, because of the intricacy of the personnel administration and recruitment, over time, HRM professionals have become increasingly specialized in operating complex rules and regulations.

Some Organizations have different arrangements. The broad policies of the International Labor Organization in Geneva are set by a tripartite Conference of government, employee representative (mainly trade union), and employer representatives who gather in Geneva once a year for a meeting that lasts more than 2 weeks—and that has been reduced from what it used to be. Almost by definition, any official who can be spared to spend more than a couple of weeks in Geneva is unlikely to be a senior player in their own organization. More regular control of the ILO is invested in a governing body which meets three times a year, again for 2 weeks, and consists of employer and employee representatives and, in practice, ‘international specialists’ from member states’ ministries of labor, or equivalent, or, often, substitutes from the countries’ ‘permanent representatives’ or Missions in Geneva, temporary (usually) bureaucrats covering all of the very varied international organizations based there. The ILO has existed in one form or another for nearly 100 years; but if you had to invent a form of democratic control for such an international organization, now it is hard to believe that anyone would come up with such a structure.

Permanent representatives belong to member states who decide where to place their staff; it is certainly not, for example, a UNESCO decision to have them placed in their Organization. In fact, the location of an IGO’s HQ is often largely determined by the size of the diplomatic presence on the ground. Therefore, most IGOs have their HQs in Geneva, New York, Rome, Vienna, or Bangkok, for example, because

most of the world's countries have embassies or permanent representations to the UN in those cities. MNEs are not conditioned by the location of their constituencies and in most cases their boards are composed of members from a single country or a small number of countries so they do not face the same challenges in terms of being accessible to their constituencies.

Whatever the arrangements, the reality is that in many cases the governmental stakeholders in the IGOs take a considerable interest in the organization's finances and in their human resource management policies. These interests might vary. For example, in the United Nations the 'Geneva Group' represents the wealthier, developed countries that, by and large, pay for the existence of these organizations. The Group of 77 (in fact now 132 countries strong) that represents those who, broadly, receive the benefit of the UN organizations' and agencies' work. They inevitably have less interest in the cost side of the HRM equation and more interest in the benefits side.

IGOs are among the most democratic and most transparent organizations in the world. Trying to get a look at the agenda of a company or private sector organization's governing body, never mind the background papers, the discussion at the meeting, who said what and the decisions that were reached, would involve a major exercise of industrial espionage. Governments and NGOs are better but still keep much of their systems secret. In the IGOs, this material is typically available on their websites for those bizarre experts who are minded to check them out. Typically, when the 'paper trails' are so extensive and the formal papers are so widely available, much is done informally. Hence, the strange irony that these most democratic of organizations may have the most autocratic of Chief Executives. Some of these Heads spend their time trying to be politically acceptable to as many people as possible in the hope of getting reelected. But many others come in and almost arbitrarily refocus the Organization's mission or make wholesale changes to the Organization's implementation systems—and, inevitably, that means to the employment position of many of the Organization's people.

The IGOs intricate constituencies as well as their hierarchical organizational structures create a lengthy response time because of the amount

of consultative processes to be undertaken prior to producing a result. To a degree, facilitating such a consultative process and providing a forum for such discussions is one of the tasks of the IGO. In short, the result is important, but so is how it has been reached. As political organizations, IGOs continually refer to their staff as their greatest asset and they usually have all the requisite HRM tools to comply with the minimal requirements. However, HRM rarely has a strategic role and the HRM departments are nearly always part of the Administration department alongside finance, procurement, and logistics.

Children of Their Time?

Finally, here, before we discuss HRM in the IGOs in more detail, it is worth noting that they may have been ‘of their time.’ The period between the end of the Second World War and the end of the twentieth century, when many of these IGOs were established, was arguably one of broad consensus among the rich developed states that such multilateral bodies were worth creating and supporting. Since then three things in particular have happened.

First, the New Public Management (NPM) agenda (see Chap. [People Management in the Public Sector](#)) is affecting more and more national governments. The introduction of business-like goals into the public sector (Bekkers et al. 2011) has its origins in the public administration literature (Diefenback 2009). It represents a stronger market orientation and the explicit introduction of market terminologies and practices. Under NPM, business-like managerialism is integrated with traditional professional values, often causing tensions and professional resistance (Noordegraaf 2007). Concrete examples of NPM practices in public sector organizations include lean management, Six Sigma, and business process reengineering in health care organizations. Human resource management is a significant element of NPM. (Van den Broek et al. 2013) for example, focus on the NPM concept of the ‘productive ward’ (a specific form of autonomous teamwork) that was introduced in hospitals to increase productivity and quality of health care services.

The first wave of new public management mainly focused on national public organizations within a country, for example, health care organizations, military defenses, the police, local governments, and education. The global financial crisis from 2008 onwards forced most Western countries to introduce governmental cuts beyond national public sector organizations and covered, for example, cross-border activities such as peacekeeping missions in the case of military defenses. There is evidence that from 2010 onwards the second wave of new public management included an explicit focus on international governmental activities including the governmental budgets for IGOs. This is reflected in the DfID (2010) document.

The new public management (NPM) agenda, which fundamentally argues that the public sector could usefully adopt similar practices to those in the private sector, is seen as adding legitimacy to responses for IGOs. Increasing efficiency and effectiveness is highly relevant for IGOs, given governmental cuts as a result of the global financial crisis. Part of an IGO's legitimacy depends on organizational effectiveness and, given the large proportion of IGO budgets spent on their people, that includes its people management (HRM). If efficiency and value for money, and clear evidence of each of those, is the best practice for civil servants in the countries paying for the IGOs, why should the national civil servants on the governing bodies not expect these best practices to apply to these International Organizations too (Brewster et al. 2013)? The result is that, as among national governments (Peters et al. 2011), there is ever more pressure on budgets. The IGOs are facing many years of reduced and reducing budgets.

Second, the economic crisis that began in 2008 put financial and political pressure on many of the governments that had been the strongest (financial) supporters of the IGOs. Not only did government resources come under even greater pressure than usual, but also the 'political sell' became increasingly difficult—how do government explain to voters and taxpayers why, while their services and support at home were being cut drastically, their money should be given to supra-national bodies for transfer to what are widely believed to be corrupt countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America? Hence many governments are looking at ways to reduce their payments to IGOs.

Third, and on a longer time horizon, the newly emerging economies show no signs of subscribing to the previous consensus about the importance of multilateral bodies. Quite the opposite: Countries such as India and China seem much to prefer to offer any developmental assistance they wish to give to poorer countries unilaterally. Why go through the grind of channeling such resources through an independent bureaucracy that may be controlled by other states, that will take the credit for the aid, and that will absorb a considerable chunk of the money in their own running costs? It is easier, and more effective, to provide it directly.

For different combinations of these three pressures, many of the IGOs are coming under financial pressure and, given that most of their budgets are spent on the people they use, that means that they can expect to employ fewer people. This is having a major effect on their HRM (Brewster et al. 2013)

Some of the IGOs, particularly those with missions that have broad social appeal, are working to replace government funding with alternatives. Some of the private foundations, such as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation or the Aga Khan Foundation, have more disposable income than many states. In modern society, social media are able to create movement of opinions, raise awareness and funds, and share information in areas related to the core mandate of some IGOs. For some IGOs partnership with private sector, non-governmental organizations and civil society are already a major part of their funding and could in the future overtake member states' contributions. For many, however, this will not be possible and their funding will remain at risk.

Unsurprisingly, perhaps, the staff reductions that come with reduced incomes, or even real cost zero increases are rarely handled strategically. While there are occasional dramatic cuts (380 staff from the World Health Organization a few years ago) in general, the changes are small. There was a reduction of 1% in the UN budget for 2014–2015 with the loss of 220 posts—mostly covered by not replacing retiring staff and re-distributing their duties among existing staff. And there are continual promises of technology upgrades to gain some efficiencies from streamlining procedures. For example, the UN aims to have a new system to delegate much of the administration of entitlements to employees, with the HRM specialists having just a review and correction role, allowing

them, in theory, to undertake better planning, more strategic HRM, career counseling, etc. It remains to be seen how far these promises become reality.

Employee Categories in the IGOs

Because of their constituencies, IGOs' staffing strategies aim at having a workforce where each governing member is adequately represented (mostly depending on their population and GDP or in some cases their contribution). This creates a multicultural environment regardless of the location of their offices. There is always a mix of both local and international staff. MNEs and most NGOs have a dominant culture at HQ and then employees (mostly of that dominant culture) expatriated elsewhere. By contrast, IGOs have everywhere a mix of both expatriates and local staff. There is usually more than one official language, and in some cases a variety of official languages are employed—the European Union has 24 official and working languages. Sometimes, the local language in an office may not be an official working language. IGOs represent the maximum cultural diversity in the workplace.

A lot of IGOs divide the staff into two: (1) those who are recruited 'internationally' and have terms and conditions to match. These are usually performing functions for which an advanced degree is required, often coupled with international experience in a specific domain (in the UN system these staff are referred to as 'Professional' or P staff); (2) those who are recruited locally and have different terms and conditions—for example, they do not get expatriate allowances nor do their contract include a requirement to be geographically mobile. These staff would normally perform administrative, technical, and support functions which would not normally require a bachelor degree (in the UN, these are referred to as the General Services category or GSs). Since national laws do not apply to these organizations, they have their own rules and regulations. The UN Administrative Tribunal is responsible for all disputes. Staff Rules concerning local staff are more closely adapted to the national law in terms of employment legislation (for working hours, maternity leave, etc.), although the best conditions will prevail (and that is usually the terms and conditions of the IGO).

For every job, there is a detailed job classification. Generic job descriptions have been introduced to add competency behaviors to simplify the recruitment process; however, still most of the positions have to be officially classified for their level to be determined prior to recruitment and/or for any budgetary change.

The consequence of such a strict classification system is that once someone is recruited for one category, the mobility between the two categories is very limited. This is despite the fact that there are many highly qualified GS employees doing jobs that are sometimes almost indistinguishable from the professional staff. Mobility between the categories is difficult, and hence, there is an artificial barrier between them in a way that does not apply in other organizations. For example, in the UN Secretariat, to move from the GS to the P category, staff have to sit a difficult exam, given once a year, consisting of two written tests (the same given for recruiting entry-level professionals) even if they have many years of experience within the same organization. Another option is to resign from the GS category in the hope of being re-recruited after a 6-month break into the P category. The same applies for consultants and individual contractors. In other IGOs, mobility may be easier but culturally the bias is such that moving from one category to another one is not always encouraged.

The concept underlying the existence of two categories is that personnel with specific expertise should be able to operate globally, even in countries where such expertise is limited, while the support staff is generally recruited locally since normally these skills are widely available. One exception to this is the Field Service Staff of the UN Peacekeeping Operations where support staff may be sent to very remote countries to start-up missions as well as to train the locally recruited staff. However, these positions, which are highly sought after, are limited. Another exception is the National Officer category which is composed of highly qualified professionals who are nationals of the country they are serving in, but whose services are compensated almost like the services of the Professional category (compensation in USD; but no benefits). In an increasingly challenging financial environment and with an increasing educated population in some emerging countries, National Officers should probably be a more popular category in IGOs, especially for professional administrative services, similarly to what happens in the private MNEs.

Especially for field-based organizations and IGOs with rotational policies in place, one of the challenges in such a diversified staffing environment is to ensure equality of treatment for the same services as well as to attract the right staff at entry level. Recruiting locally an expert willing to be globally mobile but not being able to deploy them because of his/her status at recruitment is very frustrating for both the employer and the employee. Unfortunately, in Headquarters locations such as Geneva and New York highly skilled people (especially in IT and other administrative functions) accept work in the GS category, initially attracted by the level of the compensation (very similar to the Ps, especially in Geneva). However, they soon realize that their opportunities for growth are hampered by their status.

Similarly, employees with highly specialized profiles are recruited in the Professional category and then discover that they really have to move to another duty station after a certain number of years. For a variety of reasons, they may decide that they do not want to leave either the job or the duty station. Hence, they look for opportunities in other Organizations using the same skills in the same city. This creates high turnover within each sub-organization, especially in Headquarters duty stations, with staff seconded or temporarily assigned to other IGOs in the same duty station for a long (if usually limited) time.

Some UN agencies have moved to a single staff category, but the restrictions to move beyond a certain level generally stands. In any case, what is mostly keeping the divide between the two categories is the high adherence of the work to a job description, which is nowadays obsolete as the work changes rapidly and is mostly determined by the person's interest, motivation, and drive.

Human Resource Management Policies and Practice

Compensation and Benefits

Within the above context, managing the different employee categories in IGOs represents a challenge and the administration of their

different benefits and entitlements in IGOs is one of the core HRM responsibilities (as well as the most stressful and time-consuming activity).

The salary package depends on individual status (and varies with allowances for dependents) and its level depends on both education qualifications and years of experience (increments). Unlike in MNEs or NGOs, there is no space for negotiating and the offer of appointment is 'take it or leave it.' If someone was earning more in a previous institution, there is no possibility to have their salary expectations met at the time of the offer. Some benefits such as education grants for the children, rental subsidies, days of annual leave (usually generous), paid home leave every 1 or 2 years, rest and recuperation time off for hardship locations, and tax exemptions for senior executives add on to the basic monthly salary making it hard to calculate the final take-home salary prior to acceptance of the offer.

Additionally, IGOs would pay for travel upon appointment as well as shipment of their belongings. However, unlike many NGOs and MNEs, most of the time IGOs offer little support (mostly referral or access to classified ads in their intranet) for finding accommodation or schools for the employees and their families.

Pensions and health insurance are also administered separately since the employees are not covered by local arrangements. International Civil Servants participate sometimes voluntarily but most of the time on a mandatory basis in their own tailored health insurance systems and pension funds. Although international employees can continue to pay their own national health insurance and pension scheme, joining IGOs with long-term employment patterns means that national insurances and pensions, in the home country or the host, become invalid or are held in abeyance, thus requiring the IGOs to continue to provide benefits after retirement (known in the UN as ASHI)—now a significant part of their costs. These health insurances have a worldwide coverage and include additional insurance for malicious acts, normally not covered by national insurances. Pension funds vary with organization but most allow employees to join after a certain amount of service and they are generally, compared to national or private schemes, rather generous. Given the complexity of the administration of health insurances and pension, IGOs usually have specialized staff administering these issues.

While compensation in the IGOs is free of tax from the host country, or indeed any country, in many cases a staff assessment is retained from the salary and given back to the employee's official country of citizenship to pay for service upon retirement. The most senior officials have tax-free privileges similar to diplomats (VAT exemptions for goods, cars, and other selected items) as well as access to a tax-free dispensary. All other employees, regardless of the category, have to file their tax declaration in their country of origin but their income is tax free as it is already 'taxed' at source. In UN agencies, senior officials have to file a financial disclosure of their assets to ensure that there is no conflict of interest between their duties and their other private activities.

Despite many complaints, in general, terms and conditions of employment in these inter-governmental organizations are generous: Certainly much better than those in the non-governmental organizations covered in Chap. [People Management in Volunteer Organizations and Charities](#) and better than those in many national governments (Chap. [People Management in the Public Sector](#)). Professional employees in the UN, for instance, have their salaries set under the *Noblemaire* principle, which states that their salaries should be sufficient to enable the organization to recruit from any member state. In effect that means that they pay rates equal to those in the most highly paid member state's civil service—or, in practice, that they benchmark their salary ranges against those in the US Government. Obviously, for employees coming from many underdeveloped societies, these salaries seem enormous, and even for some of those from the developed societies, they are substantially better than those they could get in their home countries. A particular problem within organizations like the UN involves 'after service health insurance,' or ASHI, as retirees are living longer than expected and what they paid for their insurances does not cover the increased cost for their expensive long-term care (international civil servants tend to live disproportionately long lives). There is considerable concern around these unfunded liabilities and their possible effect on these organizations' budgets in the future.

Retirement age was recently increased in the UN Common System from 62 to 65-years old. However, it will apply only to new employees. This is an example of how the conservative principle of employees'

acquired rights is strictly applied when changes are to be introduced in the system, even when increasing the length of service is obviously good for the UN Pension Fund (they will disburse at a later date) as well as for the employees (as they could get a higher pension) and for the organizations (which can retain highly skilled employees).

The broad principles of the payment systems in the IGOs tend to follow a pattern that was established before, and strengthened in the aftermath of, the Second World War. In those days, the civil service in countries such as the UK was seen as a prestigious occupation. Civil servants were permanent appointments, independent of the government of the day, and standing 'above' day-to-day politics. They were rewarded with what were seen as good, though not spectacularly high, salaries and job security. The position was seen as a 'job-for-life' and the pay system reflected that: Rewards increased each year, almost automatically, and while benefits and perquisites were not generous compared to some private sector jobs, civil service jobs came with a generous final salary pension that was better than almost anything on offer to the majority of people. The consequence of such salary structures was that merely adequate performance was rewarded, that turnover was low, and that promotion tended to be dependent on stepping into 'dead men's shoes.'

Tenure

Much has changed in national civil services (see Chap. [People Management in the Public Sector](#)) but it is obviously more difficult to make changes in organizations where many different national and political differences have to be finessed by often very 'hands-on' politically appointed national representatives before any new policies can be developed. In the absence of a sufficient consensus, things often revert to the *status quo ante*. Hence, some at least of the caricature of the post-war situation of the British civil service, which was often translated fairly faithfully to the inter-governmental organizations, still has some purchase there.

Thus, for example, most IGOs have very low employee turnover (although this does not apply to relief organizations and those

with extensive field-based operations). If managers and consultants in the private sector are exercised by the costs of too much turnover, their counterparts in the IGOs have to deal with the costs of too little turnover. These costs may be less quantifiable but are just as real. They include problems of enthusiasm: It is hard to maintain real excitement in the same job that you have been doing for 30 years. There are problems of knowledge decay—individuals may well have been top specialists when they joined the Organizations but, given that staff developmental activity in these Organizations is very low (Brewster et al. 1999; Croucher et al. 2004), 30 years later they are simply out of date. Costs rise: Since most people get a pay increase every year, employing 55-year-olds is more expensive than employing 35-year-olds. Salary scales are overlapping so that a new manager can be hired to lead a team where their subordinates are earning more than they are. Given the typical long service with the organization, many people reach their grade ceiling long before retirement and opportunities for promotion are limited—and have become more so with the current financial restrictions, since promotion costs the organization money. This exacerbates the motivational problem since some employees can see no way of being rewarded for additional effort or success. Rejuvenation is also a problem: Given restricted or reducing budgets, if very few people leave, then the Organization can only employ very few new people, including the people who are fully up to date with the latest knowledge in the field.

There are multiple possible explanations for the relatively high employee retention and low employee turnover rates. First, specialization within an IGO might limit the options for an individual given the job or function within the specific IGO. Second, many IGOs provide an excellent salary and employee benefits package. This often creates ‘golden cages’ and continuing employee commitment because the options outside the IGO are much worse than the rewards provided by the IGO. Third, from an internal labor market perspective, IGO workers build organization-specific knowledge and skills (for example with an international court) that has high value for the IGO and little value for the individual worker outside the IGO. In a way the IGO and individual employee are stuck with each other. Fourth, contrary to what

is often believed, working in an IGO is not widely appreciated in the private sector job market and, therefore, depending on their specialism, some international civil servants have limited choices if they return home. Some could join the academic world as lecturers or to take up further studies, and others may join civil society aid organizations (if delinked from the diplomatic career). A few have entered politics or created their own not-for-profit organization. Most commonly, professionals who, voluntarily or not, leave a career in the IGOs continue working in the sector as temporary consultants or find another position in an NGO in the same sector. This depends of course on the length of service in the IGOs and previous professional experiences. Both high employee turnover and very low employee turnover are generally bad for an organization. High employee turnover distorts the daily business, increases selection costs, and may imply knowledge and skills loss. Low employee turnover limits the recruitment of newcomers and increases immobility within an organization.

Like everything else in human resource management, here too there are no black-and-white issues—there are always shades of gray. There are benefits to low turnover: The IGOs avoid the enormous costs of constant recruitment that affect, for example, the operations of supermarkets; people who stay with an organization for a long time build up substantial social capital, with extensive networks, and considerable institutional knowledge—they know how things work in the organization and how to make them work.

Of course, there are exceptions to the low turnover scenario. Thus, the IAEA, OSCE, and NATO, to take three distinctly different examples, have significant turnover built into their systems. For the IAEA, the professional staff are top quality nuclear scientists and they are appointed onto fixed-term (7 years) contracts, because the concept is that the IAEA has to employ people in these positions who are completely up to date with the latest developments and that sitting in Vienna is not the best way to ensure that. Furthermore, the IAEA cannot afford to denude national operations of their best experts on a continuing basis: Once they have served their term of office at the IAEA, they can return to more immediate work within the national

nuclear industries. OSCE and NATO, as already mentioned, have staff seconded to them on shorter-term assignments.

Mobility

The political constraints and internal processes, outlined so far, mean that many IGOs are not free to, or have been set up not to be free to, manage their human resources independently. Thus, many IGOs are members of wider groupings, such as the United Nations or the European Union. In such cases, many aspects of terms and conditions of employment are set by the overall grouping and merely followed by the specific organization. Thus, both the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna and the High Commission for Refugees based in Geneva, with their very different functions and kinds of employees, are bound by the United Nations 'common system' of job grading and terms and conditions of employment (Davies 2002) with details set by a Committee of the General Assembly taking advice from the UN's International Civil Service Commission. Despite the common system setting rules and requirements for most employment issues in the UN, one of the first things that new Organizations within the system do when they are established is to set up their own HRM bureaucracy. For example, UNAids, when it was split away from the World Health Organization, immediately set up its own HRM department. Inevitably, these departments work at stretching the system to develop their 'own' policies and practices and thus reduce the possibilities of cooperation with other parts of the UN.

The UN family of some two dozen Organizations would seem ripe for imaginative HRM policies that would reduce costs and encourage mobility between them. For example, given that all the members of the UN family are bound by a common grading and pay structure, by broadly common terms and conditions of employment and by a common pension scheme, a shared service center, providing extensive transactional information and back-up to managers and employees in the system, would save considerable sums of money. If it were located in one of the underdeveloped societies, rather than in the hugely expensive

cities of New York, Geneva, or Rome where most of the UN's current HRM specialists are located, it would save even more—as well as contributing to the UN's mission of bringing work and wealth to poorer countries.

Outsourcing of transactional HRM to Asian countries was attempted by some IGOs (e.g., IOM and WHO); however, the quality of services and the efficiency obtained in terms of cost cutting were not always optimal. In particular, one of the most frequently heard complaints was that administrative services in French were suddenly not available anymore to francophone staff in Europe and Africa. In addition, time zone differences made direct personal contact impossible limiting communications to impersonal emails and memos.

Some of the, generally smaller, IGOs located in Europe are members of the 'Co-ordinated Organizations.' The Co-ordinated Organizations are the Council of Europe, the European Space Agency, NATO, the ECMWF, and the OECD, which provide what is in effect the secretariat. Although they are not bound by UN or EU rules and regulations, they tend to watch HRM developments in those organizations and exchange information on employment related issues, particularly those related to terms and conditions of employment, salaries, and pensions. A couple of dozen other 'non-co-ordinated' organizations tend to follow or stay close to the Co-ordinated Organizations' rules and scales. These include organizations such as CERN, the World Trade Organization (WTO), the International Criminal Court (ICC), and the European Patents Office (EPO). As a generality in this varied complex of organizations, it is salary scales and pension arrangements that are most closely followed, and even in those cases there are variations, while in other aspects of human resource management the organizations are left more to their own devices.

Many of these organizations are world leaders in some areas of HRM. The United Nations for example, although those involved are ever quick to point out their failings and how much remains to be done, has achieved much more in ensuring that its staff represent geographical and gender diversity throughout the hierarchy than almost any other organization in the world. The argument that the IGOs have much to learn from the giant MNEs can be turned on its head in

these cases—the latter have much to learn from the former in terms of diversity.

We explore next aspects of HRM through examples of HRM activities and how they appear in the IGOs.

Staffing

Many IGOs are well known, particularly among people in their specialist areas. More generally, many students in international relations and political science consider working in an IGO as their maximum ambition. These students often go through several unpaid internships, work overseas as volunteers, and study hard to pass difficult tests. Salaries in these IGOs are not low, especially at entry level, but most of those who apply to work for IGOs have strong values and often want to work for a noble cause and have ambitions to make contributions for a better world. Highly idealistic when they join, they quickly realize that the speed of change that these IGOs realize is very slow paced. While those more impatient for quick results will probably leave to work in NGOs or will create their own projects, most will stay because of the numerous benefits. Ironically, they come in with great ambitions, not for the money, but they stay for the money.

The pool of talent in which IGOs fish for new recruits varies depending on the organization's mission, scope, and structure. Generally, IGOs do not recruit direct from universities or schools: They prefer people who have already had work experience. In such cases, this involves applicants from think-tanks, academies, national civil services, NGOs and civil society organizations, or other IGOs. In rarer cases, people are recruited from the private sector. Generally speaking, IGO salaries tend to be uncompetitive with the leading private sector organizations at the senior levels but very competitive at the junior ones. Geographical differences, such a significant factor in other aspects of HRM in IGOs, are also relevant here: What may look like a fairly low salary to someone from one country may look like a lottery win to an equally talented person from a poorer country.

A paradox of recruitment in most IGOs is that a strong governing principle that recruitment should be solely merit based and that there should be no interference with that, especially from government representatives or family or friends of applicants, operates side by side with principles of positive discrimination in favor of disadvantaged groups such as women and those from certain under-represented member countries. Some IGOs take the 'merit' argument very seriously and more or less ignore the under-representation issue; others work very hard to achieve balance; and most perhaps struggle to meet both objectives.

For entry positions, which tend to be limited, efforts are devoted in many IGOs to bringing in nationals from non-represented countries or not adequately represented among current staff. However, today such potentials have more choices in terms of having a career in the humanitarian and/or development industry, and they may be more difficult to attract, given the image of IGOs as highly bureaucratic and political places, where career progression is slow, results are long term, and social media and other communications limited.

Training and Development

The bureaucratic structures of employment, making change of role or promotion difficult, have combined with shrinking staff development and training budgets to limit opportunities in the IGOs for professional growth.

Depending on the organization, staff may have to apply for every position they would like to have, laterally or vertically, competing with all their colleagues (maybe worldwide) as well as external candidates (often without any priority). If someone has joined with a specific expertise, training budget does not allow for updating such expertise (not even maintaining professional associations' fee for training or paying for examinations such as those for accountants or HRM specialists). Staff can generally take personal study leave and pay for these activities themselves.

The consequence of such limited training resources is that expertise can become obsolete and the specialists are forced to become generalists (convening expert committees to examine topics, for example) or they become the people who know enough to hire in consultants with

more up-to-date knowledge. Moving up in IGOs often requires taking up managerial responsibilities but, again, very limited resources are available to prepare experts (who are often reluctant to take people and administrative tasks) to become managers.

Some of the problems associated with low turnover could be overcome by properly funded programs of continuous learning but, again, training and development budgets in IGOs are generally scandalously low (Brewster et al. 1999; Croucher et al. 2004). Since this has been the picture for many years, causes have to be found that operated prior to the current economic problems of these organizations. Arrogant assumptions that the individuals who are recruited are the best there is and that the basic skills do not change are partly responsible. The advent of the financial crisis has led to an un-strategic response of cutting limited training budgets even further (Brewster et al. 2013). The rhetoric of boundaryless or protean careers (Banai and Harry 2004; Briscoe and Hall 2006; Hall 1996; Sullivan and Arthur 2006; Stahl et al. 2002; Yan and Hall 2002), whereby career development is seen as a staff responsibility, is a nice 'get-out' for IGOs.

Performance

A key question linked to public organizations in general also directly applies to IGOS: What is 'performance' in this type of organization? In private organizations, performance is defined and measured in terms of financial performance: Profits, market sales, market growth, and return on investments (Boselie et al. 2005). These financial performance indicators are influenced by organizational performance, in particular labor productivity, product quality, service quality, and flexibility. The definition of performance in private organizations is much more straightforward than performance in public organizations. What is good performance by, for example, NATO? The number of missiles that hit the military target? Or avoidance of conflict? Or the annual cost savings caused by government cuts in the budget? Problems defining performance at the organization level also affect definition of individual employee performance standards within an IGO. What is actually good employee performance and how can we measure that? Given the new

public management (NPM) developments, there is an increased focus on efficiency and effectiveness outcomes in IGOs. Given the large proportion of labor costs in the total IGO annual budget, the efficiency focus is very much on employee costs.

Budget performance and individual performance are separate processes in IGOs but both are very important for their constituencies. Some managers may have spent all their budgets within the appropriate time frame and even fundraised for their projects, while others may have been unable to procure the resources needed and therefore could not carry out their mandate or meet their budget targets. As in all other organizations, managers request resources but do not always get them allotted in their entirety. In IGOs, it may happen also that allotted resources can get re-allocated due to changes in priorities or political decisions.

Generally, each year senior executives have to identify SMART goals for their offices, which are then cascaded down to their subordinates. The performance management systems in IGOs are very functional, often available online from everywhere. Huge investments are devoted to financial and human performance-monitoring tools. However, there is hardly any evaluation of the return on investment of developing and using such tools.

In most IGOs, employee performance management is purely administrative. It is a case of ensuring that the system works—that the performance assessments are completed and filed appropriately, rather than being a tool to improve performance. Generally, the people in management positions have reached there as a reward for their technical expertise and experience. There are some wonderful exceptions, but in general they have limited managerial skills or even interest, and they are mostly untrained in the management role. They are expected to have tough but fair conversations with subordinates who will come from different cultural backgrounds and react differently to hierarchy. Most problematically, the systems for dealing with poor performance have to go through the chronically slow legalistic International Appeals Tribunal system. Most managers, rather than get into disputes with their subordinates that may take literally years to resolve and will have a negative effect on staff relations, simply mark everyone as average or above average. The performance management tools are rarely linked with

staff development and training issues (although some IGOs are more advanced than others on this). Generally, even yearly step increases in salary are not connected to the performance appraisals, and everyone gets the salary increases regardless of performance.

Client services surveys (report from beneficiaries) are widespread as a means of improving performance management as well as to make visible and gain reputation for efforts and results that would otherwise be unnoticed, hence ensuring resources for continuing services. However, where results are unsatisfactory there are few systems and rarely sanctions for the individual failing manager or office. Internal and external investigations, auditing, and inspections complement the performance management system and their reports have a long trail to follow before corrective action or reform is taken. Frequently, the project is completed before the results of the audits are made available. Unclear targets, budget changes, and the difficulty of and time required for auditing mean that performance management one of the most difficult tasks to carry out effectively in IGOs.

Expatriation

Contrary to the common stories about the privileged lifestyles of international civil servants (Cohen 1986: 326–332) and similar critiques among some commentators on the international aid scene (e.g., Polman 2010), most IGO staff are working in countries other than their own and have little or no inclination to go back to their country of origin. This creates HRM issues such as how to deal with dual careers, family issues (high divorce rates), legal issues, and disputes over entitlements due to frequent mobility. Many of these issues are the problems dealt with in the traditional international human resource management literature with its focus on ‘expatriation’ (see e.g., Brewster et al. 2016; Dowling et al. 2008; Pinnington and Harzing 2011) and particularly in the recent literature on self-initiated expatriation (Dorsch et al. 2012; Suutari and Brewster 2000) but the situation can be rather different for employees whose ‘home’ office may be thousands of kilometers from their original family home. People working in the IGOs were among

those identified early in the literature on 'self-initiated' expatriation (Suutari and Brewster 2000).

However, even for these employees, occasional expatriation is still an issue. Depending on the IGO, they may be sent, often, from pleasant surroundings in a major developed city to another country for a period of time. This may be a posting to another big city. But it may also be a posting to a city in crisis, or to an up-country location in an underdeveloped part of the world, or to a location in the middle of a humanitarian or military disaster. In all cases, the expatriated employee will have the benefit of international experience and language skills (Toomey and Brewster 2008), but otherwise will share the problems of other expatriates in adjusting to and performing in the new location (see e.g., Haslberger et al. 2014).

Mobility policies of some IGOs require mandatory rotations from field to HQs and vice versa although, in practice, this is tightly managed in only a few IGOs. In, for example, WFP, a policy that all employees should rotate has been amended (or undermined) by a policy aimed at increasing professional competence in certain HQ positions. In some instances, promotions are linked to mobility. This particularly affects dual career couples and families. Even when both partners are working in IGOs, there is no mechanism, and certainly no guarantees, that they will both be placed in the same duty station.

In some cases, there is little in the expatriation literature that applies to these staff. For some of them, in order to carry out the mission, they have to put themselves into positions where their lives are in danger. Living for a prolonged period in difficult conditions can threaten both their physical and mental health more generally. There is little preparation for this and while 'hardship allowances' are a recognition of the problem they hardly prevent it. Most of the IGOs with field offices have a Staff Welfare Officer to handle such issues.

Leaving

Although in the past IGOs were offering jobs for life, nowadays most IGOs have introduced flexible terms in their contractual status so that it is theoretically cheaper and easier to 'separate' staff from the

Organization. The majority of new staff now have a fixed-term contract that could or could not be transferred to ‘undetermined duration’ under certain conditions. Usually, contracts would be concluded for budgetary reasons or upon completion of the project.

These new contractual arrangements create a larger pool of candidates to tap into for IGOs. However, at the personal level moving from one contract to another may create concern and makes a more settled ‘normal’ lifestyle problematic.

Conclusions

The culture of most IGOs is very strong. For the aid organizations in particular, the culture is very pragmatic and staff often just roll up their sleeves and get on with the work to be done without much talking (a ‘just do it’ approach). In IGOs, when something happens, an urgent meeting is called by the relevant managers who discuss the issue and then recommend actions to be taken by their senior managers, who call a meeting to discuss and recommend actions to be taken by the highest ranking managers, etc., until the final decision is taken and action is requested to be implemented top-down through all the previous layers. This highly consultative process takes time—during which things change. Staff on the ground, in the ‘field locations’ as they are called, tend to just get on and do what they feel is necessary. Of course, in the more normative and less emergency-focused IGOs, where the needs of the beneficiaries are not so apparent, the bureaucracy of the meetings tends to take precedence.

However, the IGOs do face serious problems and many of them have an HRM component. Reduced funding means, given the high proportion of income spent on the people, reduced staffing levels. In these circumstances, strategic thinking IGO will adjust their mission and/or their targets within the mission. Many however, try to carry on meeting all the targets (everyone is supported by some part of their constituency) with the effect that none are handled properly.

In these circumstances, the IGOs have to examine what they mean by and how they evaluate performance. A report for the UK government (DfID 2010) suggested it should be measured by (1)

organizational effectiveness/strengths in meeting the mission and (2) contribution to the UK's development objectives (social legitimacy). However, each country will have their own objectives and they may not be compatible.

What is the role of the HRM specialists in such a scenario? Root and branch rethinking of purpose is unlikely. The UN is not going to abandon the *Noblemaire* principles or change its whole grading and compensation system—negotiating such things is currently impossible. And the organizations that use the UN as a marker will, therefore, not institute root and branch reform either. Nor is there any sign that governments are going to get any less involved in HRM: It is for many organizations the largest element of operating costs and it is unlikely that governments will abjure trying to control, and interfere with, this part of the management of these organizations.

To date, the HRM functions in IGOs have been largely administrative. This is mainly a function of the governance systems that do not allow them to be more strategic. The administrative system has to work properly, but any move toward strategic thinking should be welcomed. New technologies and human resource management information systems (HRIS) could play in favor of a more strategic role. New issues which are less dependent on the traditional HRM mechanisms could also be used to generate more scope. For example, handling talent management as well as career development issues at inter-agency level could help IGOs remaining cost-efficient without increasing their budgets. IGOs now have a wider global mobile population to tap into. In emerging countries, in Asia, Africa, or Latin America, the workforce is now more educated and prepared to help and support IGOs mandates and this is a source of talent largely untouched by private sector organizations. The establishment of inter-agency service centers where agencies share similar basic terms and conditions is also overdue and would free up some time for non-administrative work. In fact, generally, IGOs need to adopt flatter organizations to work more closely with other partners and in teams to reach common objectives.

Many of the aid and development IGOs are now working hard to move staff to their operations in the field, rebalancing their structures, opening up further opportunities for (cheaper) local staff with local

expertise, reducing HQ personnel numbers, and placing more resources where they are needed. Increasing competition from lower cost and faster-paced NGOs will challenge the modus operandi of IGOs forcing them to become less risk avert and eliminate layers of internal checks and controls. However, the demands of oversight and transparency will create a tension that IGOs will do well to resolve. The next few years will see changes—the nature of which is not yet entirely clear. Undoubtedly, it will be too slow for the critics of such bodies, but change will happen, because it has to.

Note

1. This is a world that loves acronyms: see our guide to the ones used in this chapter above.

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Authors' Biography

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