

State of Change Management in the UN System 2025

The distribution of change management work

In brief

- Change management work is distributed across organizations, meaning that those who are sponsoring, managing, or implementing change may not be positioned in a central change function, programme, or change project.
- Instead, they are likely to be positioned in a range of places and roles, bringing with them a wide variety of professional backgrounds, approaches, and experiences; they are more likely than in 2023 to do change management work alongside their other roles and responsibilities.
- Peer-to-peer learning remains a vital tool for helping change management professionals learn from each other and manage change effectively.



In 2025, 25 percent of respondents are in a transformation office or central change function and 19 percent in a programme or change project. A total of 17 percent are located in human

resources or learning and development, with the remainder sitting in information technology, digital transformation, the executive office, internal communications, and other functions such as internal audit and oversight, or support services.

Respondent location in organization



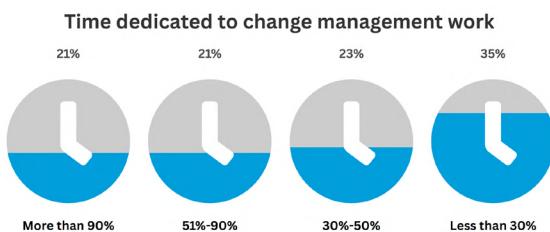
Q5. Where do you sit in the organization? (n=123)
Source: *The State of Change Management in the UN System 2025* (UNSSC, 2025)

These findings reinforce a finding from the first State of Change Management study in 2023. The work of change management is distributed across an organization, rather than being exclusively located in a central change management function.

2 Time spent on change management

Further evidence of the distribution of change management work comes from responses to the question about the amount of time respondents are dedicating to it.

- In 2025, 21 percent of respondents are doing change management work as a more-or-less full-time role (more than 90% of their time). This is a notable decrease from 2023, when 30 percent of respondents were doing it as a full-time role.
- Also in 2025, a higher percentage of respondents are spending a smaller amount of their time on change management than in 2023. More than one third of respondents (35%) are spending less than 1.5 days a week on change management work in 2025, compared to 28 percent of respondents in 2023.



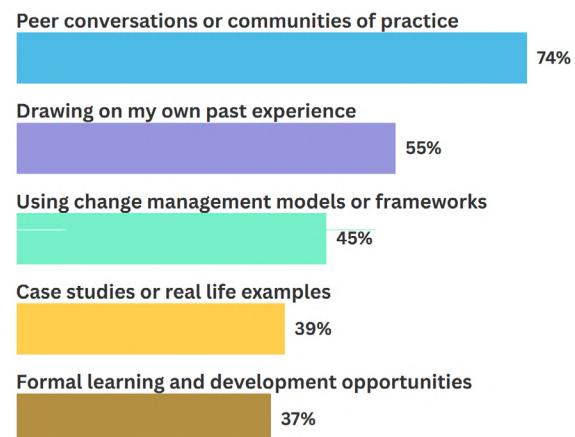
Q19: What percentage of your time is dedicated to change management work? (n=120)
Source: *The State of Change Management in the UN System 2025* (UNSSC, 2025)

3 Value of peer-to-peer learning

As change management work is distributed across an organization, peer-to-peer learning among change sponsors, managers and practitioners within and across an organization becomes increasingly important.

When asked about the tools and approaches they find most helpful in managing the changes they are working on, three quarters of respondents (74%) said peer conversations or communities of practice, with over half (55%) drawing on their own experience, and just under half (45%) identifying change management models or frameworks.

Change management tools and approaches



Q21. What tools or approaches are you finding most helpful in managing the change(s) you are currently working on? (n=119)
Source: *The State of Change Management in the UN System 2025* (UNSSC, 2025)

4 Implications

Implications for change managers and practitioners

- Map your own internal change ecosystem, familiarizing yourself with where your key change management stakeholders sit in your organization, beyond those with formal change management roles.
- Be intentional about building your professional networks to include those involved in change management who may sit outside the change management functions – for example, in human resources, learning and development, information technology, or internal communications.
- Leverage the UNLOCK network to promote peer learning and system-wide exchange of good practices among change managers and practitioners.

Implications for change sponsors

- Map and convene participants in your organization's internal change ecosystem to clarify roles and responsibilities, recognizing that this ecosystem will extend well beyond those with formal change management roles to include people in human resources, learning and development, information technology, or internal communications, among others.
- Advocate for peer-to-peer learning among senior leaders engaged in change, not only among change managers and practitioners. Peer-to-peer learning is a powerful and effective tool for professional development at all levels.

