

09 April 2018



UN Volunteer Midwives and other UN Volunteers in medical professions provide critical support in South Sudan to build capacity and fill the gaps in facilitating access to quality health services.

© (UNV, 2018)

## UN Volunteers helping to achieve Health for All

This year, the celebration of World Health Day serves as a reminder of the need for Universal Health Care for everyone, everywhere. Still too much of the population, at least half of the world's people, currently are unable to access essential health services. Everyone, everywhere has a right to benefit from health services they need without falling into poverty, without facing discrimination, and to leave no one behind.

During 2017, nearly 250 UN Volunteers worldwide served in assignments that are clearly linked to medical professions. They bolstered the work of 23 UN partner entities, including the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Populations Fund (UNFPA), UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UNAIDS, as well as 13 UN peacekeeping missions. Through their assignments, they contribute significantly to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3, which targets achieving healthy lives and wellbeing for all.

The achievement of SDG 3 is particularly crucial in East and Southern Africa, where, according to WHO, the mortality rate among children under 5 years of age remains high (84 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2015), as well as the highest infection rates of HIV (2015), and highest incidence of malaria cases (2016). Some 73 [UN Volunteers ensure healthy lives and wellbeing in East and Southern Africa](#) with WHO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNDP and UNAIDS, among others.

Since 1973, [UNV's partnership with the WHO](#) has been delivering on one of the key messages of World Health Day by providing basic social services, primary health care and combat diseases through awareness and prevention, while ensuring that the quality of those services is good enough to improve the health of the people who receive them.

Over the past ten years, 143 UN Volunteers have served in 46 countries supporting WHO's mission to "build a better, healthier future for people all over the world". They have contributed to reducing the burden of communicable diseases such as HIV/AIDS, relieving the strains of non-communicable diseases, and supporting emergency response in humanitarian crises.

One UN Volunteer in Bangladesh, for example, is [documenting WHO's emergency response of delivering critical health services](#) in Cox's Bazar, following the exodus of well over 600,000 people from Myanmar. This includes mass vaccinations against measles and polio, covering more than 150,000 children, and a mass vaccination campaign of about 700,000 people against cholera, supplemented by actions to improve hygiene conditions, sanitation and access to water – essential measures to prevent cholera outbreaks,

[UNV also partners with UNFPA](#) to achieve universal health goals, and has mobilized some 575 UN Volunteers trained as health, gender and youth specialists in 90 countries over the past 10 years. These support UNFPA's mission by helping to ensure wanted and safe childbirths, and serve as a strategic partner in building bridges between governments, civil society

organizations, youth groups and other community-based constituencies in the most remote, and often dangerous, regions of the world.

Together, UNFPA, UN Volunteer Midwives and local volunteers have helped reduce preventable deaths and improve maternal and child health, through mentoring, training, classroom teaching, and leading by example. In South Sudan, 33 UN Volunteer Midwives provide essential services and build capacity. Their contribution helps [strengthen emergency obstetrics and neonatal care](#) and [reduce the high numbers of childbirth deaths \(2,054/100,000 live births\) in the country](#).

[UNDP is a key partner of UNV](#), with 10,879 UN Volunteers having served with UNDP in 154 countries over the past ten years. UN Volunteers with UNDP are [providing primary healthcare in Trinidad and Tobago](#). A medical team of 28 UN Volunteer Doctors, one Healthcare Officer and one Bio Medical Engineer staff the Primary Healthcare Initiative, established by UNDP and the Ministry of Health in 2014.

Some 103 [UN Volunteers also served with UNAIDS](#) in 38 countries over the past 10 years. Supporting the mandate of UNAIDS, they have been working towards stopping new HIV infections, ensuring that everyone living with HIV has access to treatment, protecting and promoting human rights and producing data for decision-making. In Nepal, UN Volunteers are [supporting Nepali youth as they take sexual and reproductive health rights into their own hands](#). Driving a youth-led social media initiative, 'Live2Luv in Nepal' is giving young people a platform to voice their concerns, experiences and opinions, ask questions and challenge taboos about sexual and reproductive health.

UNV has been working closely with WHO, UNFPA, UNDP, UNHCR and UNAIDS in support of achieving health for all. Our highly skilled UN Volunteers have been enabling more people to access quality health services, where and when they need them, without suffering financial hardship.

Connect with us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) to appreciate these and other volunteers, and share how you are playing a part in University Health Care. #HealthForAll #WorldHealthDay.

---

*This article was prepared with the kind support of [UN Online Volunteer Gabrielle Byko](#).*

---

Global

Sustainable Development Goal: [SDG 3: Good health and well-being](#) [SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals](#)