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Dr Alexandr Jaguparov, national UN Volunteer with WHO Kazakhstan, conducting online training for medical workers.
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UN Volunteer helps WHO boost capacity of Kazakhstan's national laboratories

One of the most critical activities of the World Health Organization (WHO) in Kazakhstan in 2020 was to strengthen the operations of local laboratories in the context of COVID-19 and beyond. Laboratory networks are an essential platform for emergency preparedness and response, since they share information, experience and systems to exchange clinical samples and other biological materials for testing.

During 2020, the WHO Country Office in Kazakhstan initiated and conducted several missions in collaboration with Dr Joanna Zwetyenga (Denmark), Technical Expert on Laboratory issues, Biosecurity and Biosafety from the WHO Regional Office in Europe.

The first mission concluded with Dr Zwetyenga developing an action plan to strengthen laboratory response to COVID-19, with recommendations to train national mentors to

support the laboratory capacity of staff conducting testing for SARS-CoV-2.

Next, Dr Zwetyenga, together with the WHO Kazakhstan country office specialists, conducted training for nine participants from national laboratories on the quality of laboratory research to train national mentors. The final advanced training session in quality management in laboratories was organized as an online webinar with 20 participants.

Dr Alexandr Jaguparov, who collaborated with Dr Zwetyenga, is a national UN Volunteer with WHO in Kazakhstan and actively involved in implementing the *Better Labs for Better Health* initiative launched in 2012 by the WHO Regional Office in Europe. Alexandr regularly conducts training sessions and webinars in the context of COVID-19, together with his colleagues from the country office. Until now, they have trained more than 4,500 medical workers across the country.

“ I joined WHO as a national UN Volunteer on strengthening laboratories during COVID-19 response in April 2020. I work with laboratories that carry out testing for Coronavirus disease. I also assist and support the Technical Officer in infection prevention and control and the clinical management of COVID-19 patients. --
Dr Alexandr Jaguparov, national UN Volunteer

The WHO country office in Kazakhstan was proud to announce that Dr Jaguparov was selected as *Volunteer of the Year for Active Participation in Healthcare*, a prestigious international volunteer award. He was awarded for being actively involved in WHO's response to COVID-19, as well as in the implementation of the *Better Labs for Better Health* initiative.

Dr Jaguparov received his award from Kazakhstan's Minister of Information and Public Development, Ms Aida Balayeva. The award ceremony was held as part of the closing of the *Year of Volunteers* in Kazakhstan, with the participation of the nation's Head of State, Mr Kassym-Jomart Tokayev. Mr Tokayev noted the important role of the volunteer movement worldwide, saying, "Volunteers make a great contribution to the implementation of international volunteer initiatives. Kazakhstan has become one of the active participants in the UN Volunteers programme, helping those in need in different countries of the world."



Ms Aida Balayeva, Minister of Information and Public Development of Kazakhstan, honouring Dr Alexandr Jaguparov with the *Volunteer of the Year for Active Participation in Healthcare* award. ©WHO, 2020

Ms Aida Balayeva, Minister of Information and Public Development of Kazakhstan, honouring Dr Alexandr Jaguparov with the *Volunteer of the Year for Active Participation in Healthcare* award. ©WHO, 2020

“ Thanks to UNV for giving me this opportunity to be part of the WHO team, I have gained a lot of experience working here. I am glad to have a really great team that supports each other and a great leader like Dr Caroline Clarinval. --Dr Alexandr Jaguparov

Alexandr Jaguparov is one of two UN Volunteers now serving with WHO in

Kazakhstan. His assignment in support of COVID-19 response is funded from UNV's Special Volunteer Fund.* Alexandr studied at Nazarbayev University for Bachelor of Biological Sciences & Doctor of Medicine (M.D.) Programme.

“ The WHO team in Kazakhstan is very proud to count Dr Alexandr Jaguparov as one of us. His commitment, professionalism and dedication to improving access to quality health care services are laudable. --Dr Caroline Clarinval, WHO Country Office Representative, Kazakhstan



Dr Alexandr Jaguparov (second from left) at the closing ceremony of the *Year of Volunteers* in Kazakhstan. ©WHO, 2020.

**UNV's Special Voluntary Fund (SVF) was established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1970. Over time, the SVF mandate has been modified and expanded, with the SVF providing seed funding to scale up successful projects where volunteerism has had a transformative impact. The SVF is also used to develop innovative volunteer-based solutions as well as undertake research and knowledge sharing. Read more [here](#).*

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