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The ACSH conference on Civil Service in the Post-Soviet countries: Challenges, Prospects and Benchmarking, convened within the World Government Summit in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (10-12 February, 2019).

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How a knowledge exchange hub is helping to enhance global civil service capacity and effectiveness

For civil service organizations around the world, continuous exchange of knowledge and experience is an important means of building institutional and human capacity in support of the efforts of governments.

Since 2018 the [Astana Civil Service Hub \(ACSH\)](#), a flagship initiative of the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the Government of Kazakhstan has grown to become an important and valued knowledge exchange platform for 40 participating countries.

The efforts five UN Volunteers – Nazym, Arsen, Symbat, Alisher and Azhar – have been integral to the success of the Hub and its capacity to support effective civil service systems. With a special focus on Sustainable Development Goals 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) the volunteers support critical functions of the ACSH.

Nazym, Symbat and Alisher are working closely with the ACSH Research and capacity-building team, helping in data collection and analysis, developing and publishing research

papers, and information products. Arsen, meanwhile, provides administrative and logistical assistance, and Azhar maintains correspondence with key partners and supports the ACSH concept development. Azhar also assists newly arrived UN Youth Volunteers with their induction to the UNDP system and orientation with ACSH's workload and culture.

“ Being a volunteer and working together with my colleagues at the ACSH allows me to gain important first-hand experience and new skills, and meet a diverse range of practitioners and experts. Moreover, it provides an opportunity to contribute to achieving SDGs with a special focus on goals 16 and 17. --Azhar Mukhametkarim, UN Volunteer

Thanks to their active participation and contribution in setting ACSH's partnership goals, its global outreach has increased from 25 to 42 participating countries and from five to more than 75 institutional partners, representing different parts of the world. This includes successful cooperation with the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), UN entities, professional associations for public administration, leading institutions and academies and more.

In addition, the team have:

- Signed 17 memoranda of understanding and letters of cooperation with local, regional and international organizations;
- Published three issues of the International Journal of Civil Service Reform and Practice and two case studies; and
- Presented six reports carried out in the framework of one of the joint research projects.

These research publications provide global knowledge on civil service reform theory and practice, public sector human resources management and development, public service delivery, as well as ethics and anti-corruption practices. These publications serve as a resource for policy makers and practitioners on contemporary development and future trends in civil service transformation.

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic brought many challenges and at the same time, was declared Year of the Volunteer in Kazakhstan. With the support of volunteers, the ACSH conducted over 20 online capacity building events, attended by more than 3,500 civil service practitioners, academics and experts from 46 countries. During the pandemic, UN Volunteers also helped with launching the ACSH Virtual Alliance of Practitioners, which aims to support governments in the fight against COVID-19 through the exchange of experience and dissemination of advanced solutions.

Today, the Virtual Alliance contains more than 45 practical materials and resources

reflecting the experience of countries and international organizations in the fight against COVID-19, across the fields of public administration, provision of government services, education, medicine and economy. UN Volunteers continue to provide support in maintaining the Virtual Alliance as well as the official website and social platforms of the ACSH.

Chairman of the Steering Committee of the Astana Civil Service Hub Mr Alikhan Baimenov, says that in working jointly with volunteers, “there is no clear distribution of the roles of teacher and student”.

“ In helping our volunteers to grow and develop professionally, we also learn a lot from them. They bring new impetus and ideas to the ACSH’s activities, which undoubtedly, has a positive contribution to the development of the civil service of the participating countries and 2030 Agenda,. --Alikhan Baimenov, Chairman, Astana Civil Service Hub Steering Committee



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Sustainable Development Goal: [SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals](#)