



The UNICEF team checks medical supplies at a health facility in West Sumatra.

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## Supporting vaccine rollout and countering misinformation in Indonesia

Since the outbreak nearly two years ago, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) has been supporting the Government of Indonesia in its efforts to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic. As the virus swept through the archipelago, UNICEF ramped up its efforts, and that included bringing in thirteen UN Volunteers to support the COVID-19 response. Dewi, Bella and Kristian are among those who volunteered to use their expertise to help local communities.

Kristian Yudhianto serves in Indonesia's second-largest city, Surabaya, in East Java. As a Health Officer, his primary responsibility is to support the COVID-19 vaccination programme in the city and across eight districts. He works with other public health professionals to carefully analyze immunization data and help with logistical planning and vaccine readiness assessments.

UN Volunteer Dewi Ayu Kusumawardhani has a similar role as a Health Officer in Banjarmasin, South Kalimantan, on the island of Borneo. In

addition to supporting vaccine reporting, she also helped with the team's online surveys. These were used to evaluate public perceptions of the immunization process. This analysis is used to understand how the public views vaccination and, in turn, guides the development of communication strategies.

In Padang, West Sumatra, Bella Lexmita Dorra serves as yet another Health Officer. She initially trained as a pharmacist and has a Master's degree in Health Management.

Bella previously worked in a hospital. Now, she is dedicated to helping with strategy and coordination with stakeholders across West Sumatra. Bella also provides advice on safe injection procedures. She spends a lot of time analysing data, including vaccination coverage and allocation, inventory and distribution of vaccines. This helps government health officials and other stakeholders to plan for the future.

Bella, Dewi and Kristen support cold-chain management, as different vaccines must be kept at specific temperatures. They also check that injections are being administered safely.

“ UN Volunteers play an essential role in the COVID-19 campaign. They serve in the field with government health teams and partners, providing much needed technical expertise. --Sowmya Kadandale, Chief of Health with UNICEF, Indonesia

"The pandemic has put a strain on resources globally. Indonesia's vast archipelago with more than 6,000+ inhabited islands makes the vaccine rollout particularly challenging. So these volunteers, through their dedication and commitment, are a vital resource to the vaccination effort," she adds.

### Informing the misinformed

“ Hoaxes, misinformation, rumours – these have

“ harmed efforts to tackle the pandemic just about everywhere in the world. Indonesia is no different. False information, mainly through social media, has led to vaccine hesitancy. This is where the work of the UN Volunteers on the ground is particularly useful. They provide technical presentations to healthcare workers and directly engage the community to answer any concerns. Their efforts have been rewarded. Vaccination rates have been high, especially in areas where the UNV teams are working.

Like Kristian, Dewi, and Bella, ten other volunteers have been delivering services in Indonesia, from Aceh, West Sumatra and West Kalimantan, to East Nusa Tenggara, South Sulawesi and West Papua. Two are based in Jakarta, and one just recently became a full-time Health Officer at a UNICEF field office.

All of the UN Volunteers play essential roles in UNICEF's response to COVID-19 – helping to protect communities from the virus and implement protocols that may finally end the pandemic and facilitate better preparation for similar crises in the future.

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