



WHO Director General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus (right) and UNV Executive Coordinator Olivier Adam signed a Memorandum of Understanding that will facilitate the deployment specialized professionals and young people from diverse backgrounds as UN Volunteers with WHO country offices.

UNV and WHO sign Memorandum of Understanding to promote health through volunteers

The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme and the World Health Organization (WHO) signed a Memorandum of Understanding aimed at strengthening and deepening their collaboration. The umbrella agreement between WHO and UNV facilitates the deployment of UN Volunteers to WHO offices in the field.

Through this partnership, specialized professionals and young people from diverse backgrounds have the opportunity to broaden their knowledge and gain/share experience with WHO.

“ This is a win for everyone. Volunteers bring valuable skills and experience, and we boost our collective strength to support communities in the area of public health, which benefits our work and the ultimate goal of more healthy people throughout the world. -- Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director General

UNV has been [partnering with WHO](#) since 1973. Over the past 10 years, 143 UN Volunteers have served in 46 countries, supporting WHO's mission to "promote health, keep people safe, serve the vulnerable".

“ UN Volunteers have served with WHO as health and communication officers, medical doctors and midwives, supporting health logistics, facilities and response, including in emergencies. The agreement we have signed today will create even more opportunities to deploy specialized UN Volunteers – particularly women – in support of WHO's delivery. --Olivier Adam, UNV Executive Coordinator



UNV Executive Coordinator Olivier Adam (centre, right) and WHO Director General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus with staff after signing a Memorandum of Understanding. Tarik Jašarević (far left) served as a [UN Volunteer in Timor-Leste](#) in 1999 and is now the WHO Spokesperson/Media Relations. (WHO, 2018)

UN Volunteers make important contributions to UN action in the pursuit of sustainable development, with a particular focus on people in transition or crisis.

Often well qualified individuals at the beginning or the zenith of their careers, UN Volunteers bring much needed skills, experience and energy to our public health work around the world, particularly in country offices, by augmenting surge capacity during an emergency, or by doing a lot of the ground work in more stable settings.

“ I have faith that volunteerism is an effective way to bring social change, be it to reduce inequalities in health care or to contribute to improving the quality of life for people through effective contribution of skills, knowledge and time. --Faisal Shaikh, UN Volunteer Technical Officer, Mauritius

In Lao PDR, Silvia Illescas (Venezuela) serves as UN Volunteer Health Advocacy and Coordination Officer, [bolstering the WHO fight against HIV, tuberculosis and malaria](#).

Silvia coordinates contributions from various organizations, including the government, the private sector, international organizations, civil society and communities living with these diseases to ensure that everyone's views are heard and that stakeholders work together to ensure a healthy life for all citizens of Lao PDR.

“ When I hear stories of the hard-fought struggles and triumphs [of the most vulnerable groups], I cannot help but be inspired by their strength. –Silvia Illescas, UN Volunteer Health Advocacy and Coordination Officer, Lao PDR

Catalin Bercaru (Romania) joined WHO in Bangladesh as an international UN Volunteer in media and communications in May 2017. Since September 2017, he has been [documenting WHO's emergency response in Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar area](#).

“ My role is to highlight WHO's hard work but also to raise awareness

“ among people about vaccination, sanitation and other health related issues that require a positive approach from the population. -- Catalin Bercaru, Media and Communications Officer, Bangladesh

With the exodus of well over 600,000 people from Myanmar, Catalin has been reporting on the work of WHO teams delivering critical health services to vulnerable populations and supporting partners in the field.

 <https://www.unv.org/partners/unv-partnering-with-unv>

 https://www.unv.org/sites/default/files/UNV_partnering_with_WHO_web.pdf

• Bangladesh. Cox's Bazaar • Lao PDR • Mauritius

Sustainable Development Goal: **SDG 3: Good health and well-being**, **SDG 10: Reduced inequalities**, **SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals**