

# VSO INPUTS TO THE NETWORK FOR IMPROVING QUALITY OF CARE FOR MATERNAL, NEWBORN AND CHILD HEALTH

## Background

VSO and the Department of Adolescent, Child and Maternal Health at the WHO have agreed to explore a collaboration whereby VSO health volunteers would work in partnership with the participating Network for Improving Quality of Care for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health country teams.

VSO has significant expertise in developing health partnerships by placing skilled health professionals. These health volunteers share their expertise working clinically and in management roles alongside local colleagues. VSO currently has health programmes in the following Network pilot countries: Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Malawi, Myanmar, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, and Uganda.

VSO has almost sixty years' experience selecting, hiring and placing skilled and expert volunteers in health. VSO health volunteers have contributed to developing clinical guidelines and services, and have provided clinical training to nurses, doctors and other allied health professionals at all levels. VSO is able to recruit a range of health professionals including: obstetricians, paediatricians, midwives, paediatric nurses, clinical tutors and managers all of whom have a minimum of five years' experience in their chosen profession.



VSO working alongside local staff to improve newborn health

Volunteers' expertise as clinicians and senior health managers would add value in establishing the Network and achieving its long term goals. VSO has formal agreements with national governments in the countries in which it works permitting volunteers to work clinically.

The partner organization in country prepares for the arrival of the volunteer; ensuring that there is a clear role within the local health care team and that they are briefed and supported by their colleagues to enable them to contribute effectively. A clear description of roles and responsibilities will be shared and discussed with the volunteer prior to them starting in post. The volunteer should be included in team briefings and meetings and will report, and be accountable, to whoever is responsible [for the Network or health care setting].

Volunteers work closely alongside colleagues in country enabling them to gain a deep understanding of the culture and to build effective working relationships to achieve program goals. Volunteers are provided with accommodation where they are safe and comfortable. They receive a local salary i.e. a living wage similar to that of their colleagues. They should be able to afford to live and not be out of pocket as a result of their placement and their local costs are met by the host partner in country. They should be provided with, and have access to, all materials and resources needed to carry out their duties.

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If you are interested in having a skilled VSO volunteer health expert join your Network team please contact:

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