

Careers with UN Organisations

Penny Longman
Careers Consultant
28 Oct 2020

LONDON
SCHOOL of
HYGIENE
& TROPICAL
MEDICINE



Coming up ...

Introduction to LSHTM Connect – Thurs 29 Oct, 3.30 pm (GMT). Walk through of the online alumni platform with guidance on making connections with alumni.

Recording of **Dr Ekua Yankah** alumna talk (on Moodle)

LSE International Organisations Week – 2-7 Nov (booking already open, via sign up link on Moodle).

Find and fund a Phd – Wed 11 Nov 3.30 pm. Session outlining main routes into PhDs in the UK, plus guidance more generally on PhD study.

How to build contacts to develop your career – Tues 17 Nov, 10 am and Wed 18 Nov, 3.30 pm

Employer talk – Aquarius Population Health – Thurs 19 Nov, 3.30 pm.

Writing a good PhD application – Tues 24 Nov, 10 am and Wed 25 Nov, 3.30 pm

Save the date



Global and Public Health Careers panel discussion –

Thurs 26 Nov at 5.30 pm (GMT)

Hear from a panel of speakers with experience in a range of health settings including:

Abdisalam Bahwal

Cait Berry

Ngozi Erundu

Laura Hallas

(further speakers to be confirmed)

What we will cover today

The UN [funds, programmes and specialised agencies](#)

Some UN terminology

Some routes in

Example UN organisations: WHO, UNFPA, WFP, UNV

Insider insight

Tips, courtesy of Michael Emery (when at UNFPA)

Next steps?

Funds, Programmes and Specialised Agencies

Founded in 1945

193 member states (currently), each members of the General Assembly (which admits states to membership under the guidance of UN Security Council)

Shaped by founding Charter

<http://www.un.org/en/sections/about-un/funds-programmes-specialized-agencies-and-others/>

Programmes and Funds includes UNHCR, UNFPA, WFP, UNDP, UNICEF

“The **programmes and funds** are **financed through voluntary rather than assessed contributions**. The **Specialized Agencies** are independent international organizations funded by **both voluntary and assessed contributions**.”

WHO is one of the Specialised Agencies, along with FAO (Food and Agriculture Organisation) and numerous others

Why the background?



Politics
Diplomacy

Some different systems in different agencies/programmes

Some UN Terminology and its implications

Positions graded as 'P3', 'P4' etc

(P3 usually need 5 years' experience, P4 8 years' experience, PhD 'counts' for half the number of years' experience)

If you have less experience, look for 'P1', 'P2' jobs (see also YPP – next slide)

Duty stations (categories A-E – there is also H for Headquarters or similar)

- A – most secure/comfortable locations (around 10% successful applications will be external)
- E – more remote/risky locations in lower resource settings (eg Yemen, Sudan)

Categories A-C you can be accompanied by family members, not categories D-E.

R&R (rest and recuperation) periods – vary according to nature of posting. Spin the most difficult settings you get 5 days out of country every 4 weeks.

Some routes into UN: YPP and JPO

YPP (Young Professionals Programme)

<https://careers.un.org/lbw/home.aspx?viewtype=NCE&lang=en-US>

- Entry by examination, application deadline 31 Oct 2020
- Must be under 32 years before taking exam
- Must be from a participating country (UK is not one) – it is for countries that are under- or unrepresented in the United Nations
- Experience not required (but may be selection criterion)

JPO (Junior Professional Officer Programme)

<https://careers.un.org/lbw/home.aspx?viewtype=AEP>

- Must usually be under 32 years (but donor country rules vary)
- Must have at least 2 years' experience
- [Must be from a participating donor country](#)

Jem

Andrew

Further tips from Fabrizio

Example UN organisation: WHO

The WHO provides leadership on global health matters and shapes **research** on the health agenda.

It forms a bridge between research, ministries of health and those delivering – for example producing guidelines such as on AMR (something UK has asked the WHO to work on).

- It combines 6 health organisations with regional officers who are legally independent of HQ – they hire and fire independently of HQ. Because of the regional office structure it is possible to approach the regional offices directly, and you will have a higher chance of success if you are a national from that region.
- There are 151 country offices, and a high turnover of opportunities there.

Internships – now offer a stipend, based on need (but many UN organisations still have unpaid internships).

Junior Professional Officer (JPO) – funded by home country, and some countries fund JPO posts for lower resource country nationals

Short term contracts (6-12 months). It can take 5 years to move to a longer contract (permanent contracts now very unlikely)

Consultancy

Salaried post (but where the skills are available in-country UN organisations will tend to recruit in-country; opportunities for 'internationals' where there are skills gaps).

WHO Public Health internships/ UN consultancy work



<https://www.who.int/careers/internships/en/>

Internships currently limited because of COVID-19 – no application window advertised.

Normally available both at headquarters and regional offices.

Restriction: must be within 6 months of graduating.

Pay a stipend based on need.

Once in can apply for internal vacancies:

Information about applying to join the register for consultancy work:

<https://careers.un.org/lbw/home.aspx?viewtype=CON>

Careers
Who we need
What we offer
Application process
Vacancies – external candidates access
Vacancies - WHO access
Internship global vacancy

What do WHO look for?

Breadth and variety of experience and discipline (more than 50% of people come from non-health related backgrounds). More about experience on next slide.

A second language (after English) – French, Spanish, Russian, Chinese or Arabic especially useful (minority languages can be useful too).

Soft skills “you have to work under conditions of mission impossible and accomplish things in spite of those conditions”. Task in “global health diplomacy”.

- Teamwork
- Respecting and promoting individual and cultural differences
- Communication
- Knowing and managing yourself
- Producing results
- Moving forward in a challenging environment

Selection process is competency based and starts with the post rather than the person (ie identifying what is needed for that post).

Experience required, and tips for applying

For technical positions: several years of experience in that specialised area. International and developing country experience often required.

For management support: several years of experience in the same area (international experience an advantage).

Average age for joining WHO?

Tips for applying:

Apply persistently and repeatedly

Write one page letter highlighting just three points: your experience (other UN experience counts for a lot), your area of expertise (summed up in a sentence), why you would be an asset to WHO.

They use electronic pre-screening so make sure your application covers everything they require.

Example: UNFPA

UNFPA advocates for a world where every girl and woman is treated with dignity and respect. They promote the use of population data to reduce poverty and they provide life-saving support in humanitarian contexts. There is quite a lot of work with data, so they like statisticians and demographers. However, there is a lot of negotiating and diplomacy needed in this organisation as its work is highly controversial.

Controversial

- Women's rights (compared to traditions of some cultures) often controversial
- Especially access to family planning, access to abortion.

Employees say key quality needed is courage.

Particular funding challenges arising from withdrawal of US funding.

Example: WFP

Aim: to eliminate hunger by 2030

Relatively large proportion (for a UN organisation) of employees work in direct delivery, work is relatively 'operational' and 'quick'.

<https://www.wfp.org/careers>

Types of contract:

- International professionals – highly skilled, mid-career, fixed-term, highly competitive (around 100 positions per year)
- National officers – usually in your country of origin “the backbone of the organisation”
- Consultants/short term professionals (3-11 month contracts) – usually highly skilled with specialist skills (didn't quite get in as International Professionals)
- JPOs – highly skilled, usually at least 3 years' experience in field, sponsored by donor countries. More than 80% have 3-8 years' experience, 90% have a master's degree, 2% have a PhD
- WFP volunteers (mostly in Rome, but some in country offices) – apply through website
- [Future International Talent \(FIT\) pool](#)

Example: UN Volunteers

<https://www.unv.org/become-volunteer>

- International: register for Global Talent Pool (requirements: 25 or over, at least 2 years' professional experience, commitment to values and principles, ability to live and work in challenging settings – how do you demonstrate that?) <https://www.unv.org/become-volunteer/volunteer-abroad> details include profiles in demand
- National: minimum age 22, citizen (or refugee/stateless residing there legally) of country where UN is working

International and national volunteers receive a living allowance

Also online volunteers:

<https://www.onlinevolunteering.org/en>

Many part-time opportunities, including research, writing/editing, advocacy, project development and management

11 general tips for building a career in an international organisation

(courtesy of Michael Emery, HR Director, IOM)

1. Qualifications (agencies vary a little, but many prefer a master's)
2. Documents (get the paperwork right). Be aware that funders such as DFID are increasingly 'results orientated'.
3. Networking is vital
 - Tier 3 'passive networkers'
 - Tier 2 'active networkers'
 - Tier 1 'creative networkers' – be one of those
4. Reputation management (not just your online presence but the way you behave towards colleagues – 360)
5. Competencies (used for recruitment and performance management)
6. Job satisfiers (think about what satisfies you in a job)
7. Values (eg could you answer "What are the three values that are most important to you and how do these values translate into your work?")

8. 'Opportunity scans' – where are you most likely to find an opportunity?
9. EQ (emotional intelligence) – the ability to fit. How aware are you of your cultural/personality coding?
10. Momentum – most people join in their early 30s (NB WHO suggested 42...), have to build towards that.
11. Luck – “when preparation meets opportunity” (Oprah), “The harder I work, the luckier I get” (Edison)

Core skills: agility, love, diversity, care.

Your situation, and possible next steps

Can you apply for
'in-country' posts in
your country?

Could you
afford to do
an unpaid
internship?

How much
experience do you
already have?

Would you consider
yourself a Tier 1, 2 or
3 networker?

What languages do
you speak?

Are UN jobs what you
thought they were? Are
you keen enough to
persevere on this route?

What steps
would bring
you closer?

Which would be the
most appropriate UN
organisation for you?

Would YPP or JPO be potential
route for you?

What other organisations
could you work for?!

What are your values?
Can you articulate
them?

Other organisations

[Look at destinations info on Moodle](#)

(Marie Stopes International; Terrence Higgins Trust; WaterAid; GSK; KPMG; Boston Scientific; CHAI; Ministries of Health of various countries; MRC/UVRI Uganda Research Unit on Aids; Cancer Research; IQVIA; Anthony Nolan Trust; GOAL; MSF; Merlin; Action Against Hunger; Deaf Child Worldwide, Malaria Consortium...)

Get ideas from LinkedIn (LSHTM alumni)

Brief reports on 20 organisations:

<https://ble.lshtm.ac.uk/mod/folder/view.php?id=104757>

Where to find public health jobs:

<https://ble.lshtm.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=105280>

What organisations are working in the area (geographical) or field (topic) that you care most about?

What contacts do you have/can you make?

Further info

[Job hunting in NGOs and small organisations](#) (recording);

[Securing your first fieldwork experience](#) (recording);

[Global and Public Health Careers Forum 2018](#) (recording);

[Global and Public Health Careers Forum 2019](#) (recording);

Geneva Organisations ([Slides from PH4D presentation](#) on their 2019 visit to various Geneva organisations, plus [notes from the presentation](#));

[Notes and recordings from previous LSE International Organisations days are available here](#) (scroll down page).

Gain experience eg

CHAI volunteers: <https://clintonhealthaccess.org/volunteer/>

IndiGO volunteers: <http://www.indigovolunteers.org/> (currently suspended but you can sign up for updates)

Raleigh International: <https://raleighinternational.org/volunteer/>

Anything!

Coming up ...

Introduction to LSHTM Connect – Thurs 29 Oct, 3.30 pm (GMT). Walk through of the online alumni platform with guidance on making connections with alumni.

Recording of **Dr Ekua Yankah** alumna talk (on Moodle)

LSE International Organisations Week – 2-7 Nov (booking already open, via sign up link on Moodle).

Find and fund a Phd – Wed 11 Nov 3.30 pm. Session outlining main routes into PhDs in the UK, plus guidance more generally on PhD study.

How to build contacts to develop your career – Tues 17 Nov, 10 am and Wed 18 Nov, 3.30 pm

Employer talk – Aquarius Population Health – Thurs 19 Nov, 3.30 pm.

Writing a good PhD application – Tues 24 Nov, 10 am and Wed 25 Nov, 3.30 pm

Save the date



Global and Public Health Careers panel discussion –

Thurs 26 Nov at 5.30 pm (GMT)

Hear from a panel of speakers with experience in a range of health settings including:

Abdisalam Bahwal

Cait Berry

Ngozi Erundu

Laura Hallas

(further speakers to be confirmed)