



World Health
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Bahrain

Biannual Newsletter

WHO BAHRAIN COUNTRY OFFICE

02
issue

July - December
2023



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75

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Welcoming Notes from WHO Representative



Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative, Bahrain

Welcome to our second newsletter edition of the World Health Organization (WHO) Country Office in Bahrain. This newsletter highlights the key activities and initiatives of the WHO Country Office between July and December 2023. The start of 2023 marked the beginning of a year-long celebration of the 75th anniversary of WHO. In many ways, the 75th anniversary serves as a reminder of WHO's progress and resilience in the face of adversity, but also of what still needs to be

accomplished to promote health, keep the world safe and serve the vulnerable.

On the following pages of this newsletter, we shall endeavour to showcase our dedicated efforts to fulfil the promise of the WHO Constitution: “the attainment of the highest level of health and well-being for all” in the Kingdom of Bahrain. At the heart of everything we do in and with the Kingdom of Bahrain remains accelerating progress towards the health-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and achieving the Triple Billion targets of the WHO Thirteenth General Programme of Work (GPW 13) 2019–2023.

As we conclude our 75th anniversary year celebration, I extend my sincere appreciation to the Ministry of Health, our partners and the community at large on our shared journey to achieve Health for All in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Dr Tasnim Atatrah,
WHO Representative in Bahrain

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WHO Bahrain Conducts Two-Day Mission in Oman to Exchange Knowledge on the Workload Indicators of Staffing Need Methodology



Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative, Bahrain; Dr Deena Alkhamis, Public Health Officer, WHO Country Office in Bahrain; and the Workload indicators of staffing needs (WISN) technical team, during the “Workload Indicators of Staffing Needs (WISN)” field visit, 30-31 July 2023, Muscat, Oman

Further augmenting the long-standing collaborative relations between Bahrain and Oman, the WHO Country Office in Bahrain organised an experience-sharing mission to Muscat between 30 and 31 July 2023, in close coordination with the WHO Country Office in Oman. It facilitated the exchange of best practices and lessons learned on using and implementing the Workload Indicators of Staffing Need (WISN) methodology. This mission built on the workshop conducted by the WHO Country Office in Bahrain in March 2023 to build national capacities on the method.

The WISN methodology helps to determine how many health workers of a particular type are required to cope with the workload of a given health facility and assesses the workload

pressure of health workers in that facility. It uses the data available in health information systems and provides options for closing gaps in workforce availability.

The mission members included the WISN technical

task force led by Dr Zahra Bader, Strategic Health Planning Advisor, Supreme Council of Health, and Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative in Bahrain. The WISN technical task force was formed in early 2023



Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative in Bahrain, and the WISN technical task force meet with Dr Jean Yaacoub Jabbour, WHO Representative in Oman, 30-31 July 2023, Muscat, Oman.



The WISN technical task force visits a primary healthcare facility in the Muscat Governorate, 30-31 July 2023, Oman.

following the launch of a national initiative to identify the health workforce requirements at the primary healthcare level under the direction of the Supreme Council of Health, Ministry of Health, and Primary Healthcare

Centres.

Over the course of 2-days, the mission members met with several high-ranking officials from the Ministry of Health in Oman, including Dr Fatima Mohammed Al Ajmi, Undersecretary for

Administrative, Financial, and Planning Affairs, to explore and share lessons learned from Oman's implementation experience of the WISN methodology. The mission also allowed Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative in Bahrain, and Dr Jean Yaacoub Jabbour, WHO Representative in Oman, to discuss future collaboration opportunities between the two country offices towards ensuring healthy lives for everyone, everywhere.

Among the key highlights of the mission was a field visit to a primary healthcare facility in the Muscat Governorate. This visit was instrumental in providing the mission members with first-hand knowledge on recording, analysing, and reporting data related to staffing status and needs at health facilities.

“The delegation gained first-hand experience and insight into the Ministry of Health of Oman’s journey in implementing WISN, along with sharing priorities and how to mitigate challenges faced in its implementation. The WISN technical team also looked closely at our neighbouring country’s evidence-based results and their impact in supporting planning for human resources for health in the country....We would like to express our gratitude and appreciation to the WHO Country Offices in Bahrain and Oman for coordinating this mission.”

Dr Zahra Bader, Strategic Health Planning Advisor, Supreme Council of Health

Did You Hear About HIV Self-Testing?

The WHO Country Team Joins in World AIDS Day Campaign



The WHO Country team joins in the global campaign for World AIDS Day, 2 December 2023.

The WHO Country Office's team joined in the global campaign to mark World AIDS Day by undertaking HIV self-tests to raise awareness of the importance of testing in maintaining a healthy life and preventing HIV transmission. The HIV self-tests were made available to the WHO Country Office's team with the support of

the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean towards attaining a World without AIDS.

Celebrated every year on 1 December, World AIDS Day is an opportunity to reflect on the progress made to date, raise awareness about the challenges that remain to achieve the goals of ending AIDS by 2030 and mobilise

all stakeholders to jointly redouble efforts to ensure the success of the HIV response. The theme of World AIDS Day 2023 is "Let communities lead" to mark the pivotal impact communities have had in shaping the HIV response. It is also a call to action to enable and support communities in their leadership roles.



“ Self-testing is a tool to empower people, increase awareness and take control to access the health care they need.”

Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative, Bahrain

“ Getting tested is the only way to know your HIV status. With access to effective HIV treatment and care, individuals who test positive can live a healthy life with HIV without passing it on to anyone else.”

Ms Nada Mohamed, Lead Public Health Consultant, WHO Country Office in Bahrain



“ HIV self-testing empowers individuals with knowledge, reduces stigma, and promotes early detection for a healthier community.”

Ms Eman Saleh, Intern, WHO Country Office in Bahrain



“ HIV remains a major global public health issue and can be diagnosed through self-test kits that provide same-day results. This greatly facilitates early diagnosis and linkage with treatment and prevention.”

Ms Shanine Mohebat, Health Promotion Officer, WHO Country Office in Bahrain



Preventing Antimicrobial Resistance Together: WHO Bahrain Celebrates World AMR Awareness Week



Dr Tasnim Atarah, WHO Representative in Bahrain, and Professor Mohammed El-Hilo, Dean of the College of Science, University of Bahrain, mark World AMR Awareness Week, 22 November 2023.

On the occasion of World AMR Awareness Week (WAAW), the WHO Country Office in Bahrain organised an event on 22 November 2023, in close collaboration with the University of Bahrain, to raise students' awareness of the global threats of antimicrobial resistance (AMR), and to contribute to a future generation of literate antibiotics users.

The event was inaugurated

by Professor Mohammed El-Hilo, Dean of the College of Science, University of Bahrain, and Dr Tasnim Atarah, WHO Representative in Bahrain, bringing together more than 50 students. It featured informative lectures by the academic staff to sensitise university students on the issues of AMR, including the use of antibiotics and the concept of the One Health approach that covers human health, veterinary

health, and environmental health.

In addition, a pop-up stall was set up where educational brochures on AMR were handed out to students. Other activities featured at the event included having students and academic staff take photos in an AMR photobooth cardboard frame to display their commitment to slowing the spread of AMR and to inspire others to join in the WAAW global campaign. All event

“ World AMR Awareness Week highlights the interconnectedness of human, animal, and environmental health, and emphasizes the need for collaboration across multiple sectors. By reducing the inappropriate use of antibiotics, we can help control the spread of antimicrobial resistance.”

Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative in Bahrain



Branded tote bags on World AMR Awareness Week, 22 November 2023.



Students and academic staff take photos in an AMR photobooth cardboard frame during World AMR Awareness Week, 22 November 2023.

attendees received a WHO “Will you go blue for AMR?” branded tote bag to spread awareness about antibiotic abuse and encourage positive behaviour changes in the community.

The event concluded with an acknowledgement of three students from the University of Bahrain: Neda Muslem Almubarak, Hayat Basem Almarbati, and Salma Dost Mohammed, who created outstanding educational posters that captured the WAAW 2023 theme. The winning students received certificates of appreciation signed by Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative, to commend their creativity and hard work.

The WAAW is a global campaign observed from 18 to 24 November every year to raise awareness and promote best practices among the public, One Health stakeholders, and policymakers who play a critical role in reducing the further emergence and spread of drug-resistant infections. The theme of WAAW 2023 remains “Preventing Antimicrobial Resistance Together,” as in 2022, to emphasise the need for cross-sectoral collaboration to preserve the efficacy of antimicrobials.

Let's Walk the Talk:

WHO Bahrain Unites in Action to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals for, with and by Persons with Disabilities



The WHO Country Office in Bahrain joins the Ministry of Health in celebrating the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, 2 December 2023.

Commemorating the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, the WHO Country Office in Bahrain and the Ministry of Health jointly hosted a “Walk the Talk” event on 2 December 2023 in Sa’ada Sea Front, Muharraq. The event was organised with support from youth volunteers whose active participation was made possible by the Ministry of Youth Affairs.

With a message of “Leaving no one behind,” this joint event

brought together government officials, representatives from the United Nations agencies, health champions, and the community at large to promote the wellbeing of persons with disabilities and to raise awareness of the critical role accessibility plays in improving physical activity and social inclusion.

The event also provided an opportunity to bring to the forefront the recently launched National Action Plan for Persons

with Disabilities, another milestone demonstrating Bahrain’s commitment to promoting disability inclusion across all sectors.

Dr Samya Ali Bahram, Assistant Undersecretary for Public Health, and Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative in Bahrain, inaugurated the walking event. This was followed by a symbolic 800-meter walk around Sa’ada Sea Front, where participants showcased



The community at large walks the talk to mark the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, 2 December 2023.

their commitment to the United Nations' principle "Nothing About Us Without Us."

The International Day of Persons with Disabilities is a United Nations Day celebrated every year on 3 December. It aims to promote the rights and wellbeing of persons with disabilities at every level of society. WHO joins other partners worldwide on this day to call for innovation and transformative solutions to achieve Health for All.



Members of the disability community join the Walk the Talk event to promote inclusive and accessible society for all, 2 December 2023.

Building Back Better:

Bahrain Initiates the Second Round of Joint External Evaluation

“ By participating in the JEE for the second time, Bahrain has committed to strengthening its health systems for a safer and healthier world. ”

Dr Ejlal Al-Alawi, former Assistant Undersecretary for Public Health

Under the direction of the Ministry of Health, the WHO Country Office organised a 3-day workshop from 3 to 5 September 2023 to mark the initiation of the second round of Joint External Evaluation (JEE) for the International Health Regulations (IHR) core capacities in Bahrain. The workshop aimed to build national capacities on completing the JEE's self-assessment phase and lay the groundwork for the external evaluation phase.

The JEE is part of the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework of International Health

Regulations 2005 (IHR). It is a voluntary, multisectoral process to assess the country's capacity to prevent, detect, and rapidly respond to public health risks. The JEE allows countries to identify the most urgent needs and opportunities in 19 technical areas of IHR core capacities within their health security system for enhanced emergency preparedness, detection and response, leading to consensus on national priorities to frame or update the National Action Plan for Health Security (NAPHS).

Dr Ejlal Al-Alawi, former

Assistant Undersecretary for Public Health, and Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative in Bahrain, inaugurated the workshop. The opening ceremony also included an introductory address by Dr Dalia Samhouri, Regional Manager, Emergency Preparedness and International Health Regulations, WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean.

More than 35 experts from different sectors participated in the workshop. They included professionals from the following ministries: Health, Foreign



Group photo of participants during the Joint External Evaluation Workshop, 3-5 September 2023, Manama, Bahrain - Photo Credit: Ministry of Health



Facilitators during the Joint External Evaluation Workshop, 3-5 September 2023.

Affairs, Industry and Commerce, Municipalities and Agriculture, Interior, and Transportation and Telecommunications. Among the participants were also experts from the Primary Healthcare Centres, Government Hospitals, National Health Regulatory Authority, National Oil and Gas Authority, and Bahrain Airport Services.

Facilitators from the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean supported the workshop, providing participants with guidance on the JEE tools and the processes. This workshop built upon the outcomes of a simulation exercise training of trainers organised in February 2023 by the WHO Country Office in Bahrain.

Moving forward, the identified actions and outcomes from the second round of JEE will inform an update of the National Action Plan for Health Security to strengthen national capacities and country preparedness for all-hazard emergencies towards ensuring that 1 billion more people are better protected from health emergencies.



Participants engage in group work discussions during the Joint External Evaluation Workshop, 3-5 September 2023.

WHO Bahrain Leads a Three-Level Mission on the Establishment of Maximum Containment Laboratory in Bahrain

Under the direction of the **Ministry of Health**, the Country Office organised a WHO three-level mission between 31 October and 1 November 2023 to evaluate the potential establishment of a maximum containment laboratory (BSL-4) in Bahrain. This mission was arranged in response to a request made by the Central Public Health Laboratory.

High-containment laboratories are critical in preventing, detecting, and responding to global security health threats. They are classified into biocontainment levels 1–4, depending on the pathogenicity of microbes investigated. Biosafety Level 4 (BSL-4) laboratories analyse the most dangerous pathogens with a high risk of life-threatening disease for which no

available vaccine or therapy exists.

The WHO mission team brought together experts from the three levels of the organisation: the Country Office in Bahrain, the Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, and the Headquarters Office in Geneva. Over two days, the mission team visited the Central Public Health Laboratory and held meetings with its team to support advanced laboratory preparedness for high-threat pathogens. Many strengths were identified during these meetings, including strong national leadership, staff competency and dedication, and high-quality equipment.

The field visit and technical discussions guided the development of a comprehensive

roadmap to strengthen Bahrain's capacity to handle high-threat pathogens through a strategic and phased approach that considers immediate needs, mid-term renovations, and potential long-term expansions in laboratory capabilities.

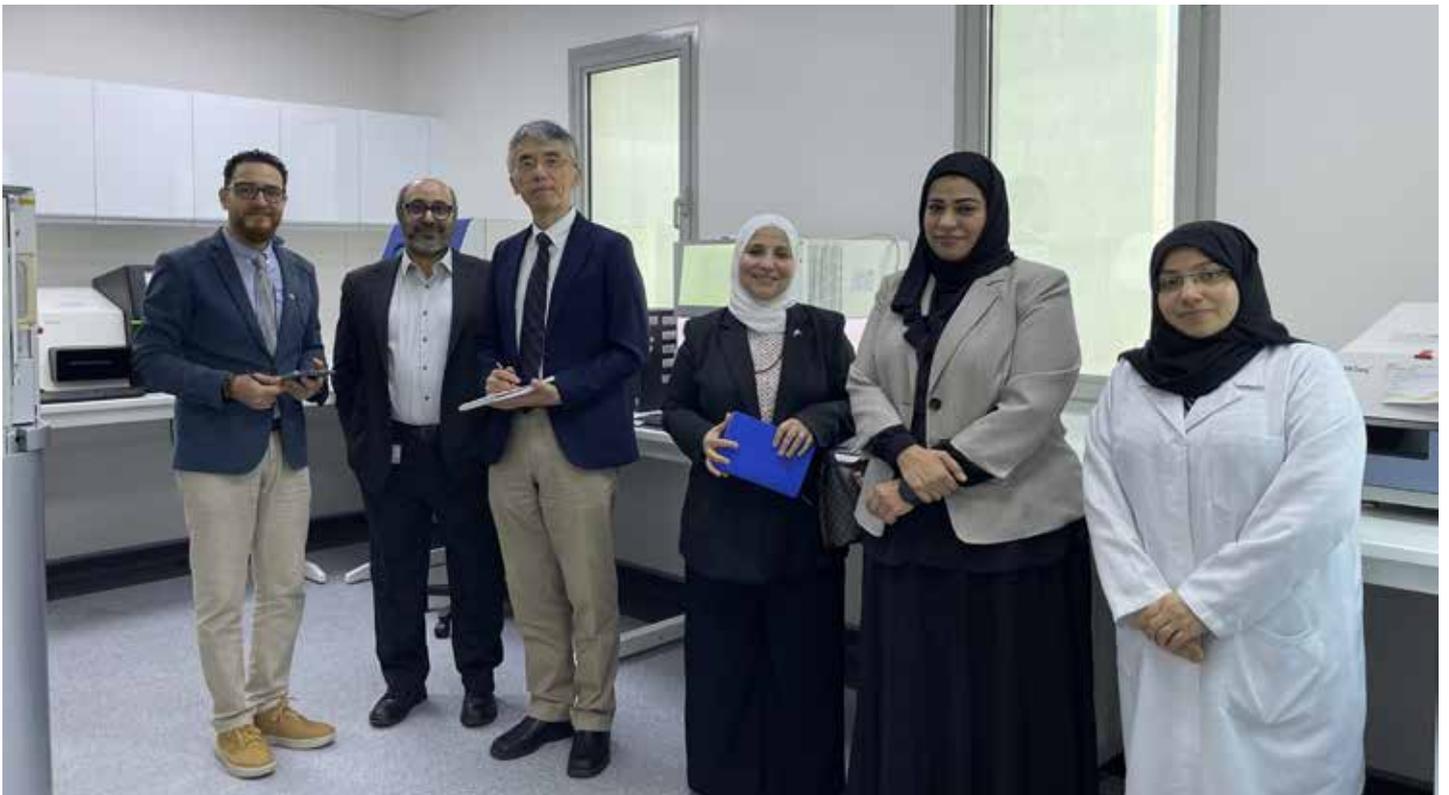
The team met with H.E. Dr Jaleela bint AlSayed Jawad Hasan, Minister of Health, at the end of the mission to discuss the way forward for WHO support, including the provision of training on handling high-threat pathogens to enhance the competencies of biosafety officers, sharing relevant guidelines, procurement of diagnostic kits, and the development of operational plans for high-containment facilities.



Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative in Bahrain; Dr Mustafa Aboualy, Laboratory Officer, Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean; and Dr Kazunobu Kojima, Medical Officer, WHO Headquarters, visit the Central Public Health Laboratory, 31 October 2023.



H.E. Dr Jaleela bint AlSayed Jawad Hasan, Minister of Health, meets with Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative in Bahrain; Dr Mustafa Aboualy, Laboratory Officer, Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean; and Dr Kazunobu Kojima, Medical Officer, WHO Headquarters, 1 November 2023.



Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative in Bahrain; Dr Mustafa Aboualy, Laboratory Officer, Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean; and Dr Kazunobu Kojima, Medical Officer, WHO Headquarters, visit the Central Public Health Laboratory, 31 October 2023.

Harnessing the Power of Communication:

Experts in Bahrain Gather to Boost Health Communications Capacities and Effective Community Engagement

Communication is a powerful tool to address growing and complex health challenges. It can help to change people's knowledge, attitudes and behaviours and empower them to make choices that help protect and improve health and wellbeing. To this end, the WHO Country Office in Bahrain organised a capacity-building workshop on Multidisciplinary Health Communications and Community Engagement from 3 to 5 December 2023, under the guidance of the Ministry of Health.

With the ongoing challenges posed by various health threats in the WHO Eastern Mediterranean region and beyond – from disease outbreaks to the impacts of climate change – the workshop aimed to boost national capacities to

engage and communicate with various audiences. Focusing on routine and emergency communications, the workshop drew on advancements in the health communications field and behavioural science, and it explored lessons learned from community engagement during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dr Samya Ali Bahram, Assistant Undersecretary for Public Health, and Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative in Bahrain, inaugurated the workshop. It brought together around 50 experts from different sectors, including the Ministry of Health, Primary Healthcare Centres, the Supreme Council of Health, and the National Communication Centre.

Facilitators from the WHO

Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean and WHO Headquarters supported the workshop delivery. The workshop employed a blended learning approach of presentations and group work to build participants' capacities in planning and implementing effective communication and engagement strategies and interventions targeting audiences such as communities, media professionals, and policymakers.

The workshop concluded with remarks by Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative, and Dr Mohamed Abdulmajeed Alawadhi, Public Health Director, highlighting the next steps towards leveraging the full power of communication to improve everyone's health and wellbeing.



Participants of the Multidisciplinary Health Communications and Community Engagement Capacity Building Workshop, 3-5 December 2023.



Participants engage in group work discussions during the Multidisciplinary Health Communications and Community Engagement Capacity Building Workshop, 3-5 December 2023.



Participants engage in group work discussions during the Multidisciplinary Health Communications and Community Engagement Capacity Building Workshop, 3-5 December 2023.

Healthy Cities Programme Gains Momentum in Bahrain:

The Capital, Northern, and Southern Governorates Pledge to Expand Implementation Beyond Cities

Urbanisation is a transformative trend changing how we live, work, and experience our urban environments. By 2050, the world's urban population is expected to double, exposing them to various environmental, social, and behavioural factors that impact health and wellbeing. In response to these challenges, WHO launched the Healthy Cities Programme in 1986 to place health high on cities' agenda and promote health, equity and sustainable development through effective intersectoral coordination.

Realising the critical role of the Healthy Cities Programme in addressing 21st-century health challenges, three out of

Bahrain's four governorates are pledging to expand the initiative's implementation beyond individual cities to the entirety of their respective governorates. They are the Capital, Northern, and Southern Governorates. To date, four cities in Bahrain— Umm-Al-Hassam, Manama, Busaiteen/Al-Sayah, and A'ali —are recognised as Healthy Cities.

Moving towards their designation as Healthy Governorates, the Capital, Northern, and Southern Governorates signed formal Letters of Collaboration with the WHO Country Office in Bahrain to initiate the implementation scale-up at the governorate level. The

signing of these formal letters is a testament to the nationwide dedication to the Healthy Cities Programme as a strategic vehicle for health development in urban settings, under the leadership of the Ministries of Health and Interior.

The signing ceremony of the Letter of Collaboration with the Capital Governorate took place on 24 July 2023. It convened H.E. General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, Minister of Interior; H.E. Dr. Jaleela bint AlSayed Jawad Hasan, Minister of Health; Lieutenant-General Tariq Al Hassan, Chief of Public Security; H.E. Shaikh Rashid bin Abdulrahman Al Khalifa, Governor



The signing ceremony of Letter of Collaboration between the Capital Governorate and WHO Country Office in Bahrain to expand implementation of Healthy Cities Programme, 24 July 2023. Photo Credit: Capital Governorate



The Southern Governorate signs formal Letter of Collaboration with the WHO Country Office in Bahrain to expand implementation of Healthy Cities Programme, 4 September 2023. Photo Credit: Southern Governorate

of the Capital Governorate; and Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative in Bahrain.

The Northern Governorate signed the Letter of Collaboration on 14 August 2023. The signing ceremony was attended by H.E. Ali bin Sheikh Abdulhussein Al-Asfour, Governor of the Northern Governorate; Dr Ejlal Al-Alawi, former Assistant Undersecretary for Public Health; and Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative in Bahrain.

Moreover, the Southern Governorate signed the Letter of Collaboration on 4 September 2023. The signing ceremony brought together His Highness Shaikh Khalifa bin Ali bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, Governor of the Southern Governorate; Dr Wafa AlSharbati, Director of Health Promotion; and Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative in Bahrain.



The Northern Governorate signs formal Letter of Collaboration with the WHO Country Office in Bahrain to expand implementation of Healthy Cities Programme, 14 August 2023. Photo Credit: Northern Governorate

From Healthy Cities to Healthy Governorates: Exchange of Experiences Workshop in Bahrain

Bahrain has made noticeable progress in implementing the Healthy Cities Programme; four cities – Umm-Al-Hassam, Manama, Busaiteen/AI-Sayah, and A'ali – are recognised as Healthy Cities. Building on these achievements, the Capital, Northern, and Southern Governorates have signed Letters of Collaboration with WHO in the second half of 2023 to expand the implementation of the Healthy Cities Programme beyond individual cities to the entirety of their respective governorates.

In line with these efforts to expand the Healthy Cities Programme, the WHO Country Office in Bahrain organised the Healthy Cities Exchange of Experiences Workshop on 5 October 2023 under the direction of the Ministry of Health. The workshop aimed to facilitate the exchange of Healthy Cities' best practices and lessons learned among Bahrain's four governorates and discuss the



Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative in Bahrain, and Dr Wafa Alsharbaty, Director of Health Promotion, inaugurate the Healthy Cities Exchange of Experiences Workshop and Photography Exhibition, 5 October 2023.

next steps for expanding the implementation of the Programme in the Capital, Northern, and Southern Governorates.

Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative in Bahrain, and Dr Wafa Alsharbaty, Director of Health Promotion, inaugurated the workshop. It involved the

multisectoral participation and meaningful engagement of more than 25 experts from Bahrain's four governorates. Experts from the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean supported the workshop's delivery.

As a strategic vehicle for health development and wellbeing



Participants of the Healthy Cities Exchange of Experiences Workshop and Photography Exhibition, 5 October 2023.

in urban settings, the Healthy Cities Programme is aligned with key global political commitments, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with its pledge to “leave no one behind”. This is manifested in the renewed emphasis on the interconnectedness of social, economic and environmental factors, highlighting the need for whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches to ensure that all people fulfil their potential to live in health and with dignity and equality.

Following the workshop, the participants were invited to the Healthy Cities Photography Exhibition, which showcased the unique features of Bahrain’s four Healthy Cities: Umm-Al-Hassam – Living in Heritage, Manama – Living in Entrepreneurship, Busaiteen/ AISayah – Living in Knowledge, and A’ali – Living in Art.



Participants of the Healthy Cities Exchange of Experiences Workshop and Photography Exhibition, 5 October 2023.

Scaling up the Healthy Cities Programme:



Dr Tasnim Atarah, the WHO Representative in Bahrain, takes part in the World Diabetes Day event under the lead of H.E. Ali bin Sheikh Abdulhussein Al-Asfour, the Governor of the Northern Governorate, 16 November 2023. Photo Credit: Northern Governorate.

Marking World Diabetes Day 2023, the Northern Governorate organised an event on 16 November 2023 under the theme of “Towards a healthy governorate free of diabetes - know your risks, know your response”. The event aimed to raise awareness of the impact of diabetes on people’s health and to highlight opportunities to strengthen the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of diabetes.

The event brought together government officials, United Nations Representatives, health champions, and the community at large, and featured an awareness-raising exhibition, free medical examinations, and walkathon.

WHO Bahrain Organizes Workshop to Support Planning for Climate-resilient Health System



Group photo of the participants at the Workshop on Conducting Climate Change and Health Vulnerability and Adaptation Assessment and the Health National Adaptation Plan, 29-30 October 2023.

The WHO Country Office in Bahrain, under the guidance of the Supreme Council for Environment and the Ministry of Health, organised a workshop on Conducting Climate Change and Health Vulnerability and Adaptation Assessment and the Health National Adaptation Plan (HNAP) between 29-30 October 2023.

The workshop's main aim was to foster an outcome-oriented dialogue around climate change's direct and indirect health impacts and the urgent need to build climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable health systems that can anticipate, respond to, cope with, recover from and adapt to climate-related shocks. It also introduced WHO tools and guidelines that can support countries to achieve their commitments to build climate-resilient health systems.

Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative in Bahrain;

Ms Layla Sabeel, Director of Climate Change and Sustainable Development, Supreme Council for Environment; and Dr Mohamed Abdulmajeed Alawadhi, Public Health Director, Ministry of Health, inaugurated the workshop.

The workshop brought together more than 50 participants from various sectors, including the Supreme Council for Environment, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Sustainable Development, Ministry of Transportation and Telecommunications, Ministry of Works, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture, National Health Regulatory Authority, and Primary Healthcare Centres. Experts from the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean facilitated the event.

A defining aspect of the workshop was its focus on increasing knowledge of the development process of a

health national adaptation plan (HNAP). An HNAP is the health component of a country's national adaptation plan. The development of HNAP is among the commitments made by countries at the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) towards building climate-resilient health and environmentally sustainable health systems.

The first step in developing an HNAP is to conduct a climate change and health vulnerability and adaptation assessment (V&A). This will provide the foundational information to devise actions to address the health impacts of climate variability and change at any level. Guided by the V&A, the HNAP then sets out a range of actions to address the health impacts of climate change and build climate-resilient health systems.

Invaluable insights from the group work discussions informed the workshop outcomes. The



Facilitators in open discussions during the Workshop on Conducting Climate Change and Health Vulnerability and Adaptation Assessment and the Health National Adaptation Plan, 29-30 October 2023.

discussions revolved around the need for further capacity-building and awareness-raising on the impacts of climate change on health and wellbeing. Moreover, the participants worked with one another to identify opportunities and good practices for developing the HNAP for Bahrain.

This workshop served as a practical starting point to initiate a V&A and the development of the HNAP for the country, building on Bahrain's National Adaptation Investment Plan. In keeping with the country's national priorities, this step marks yet another milestone in ensuring that health is at the centre of national action on climate change.



Participants engage in open discussions during the Workshop on Conducting Climate Change and Health Vulnerability and Adaptation Assessment and the Health National Adaptation Plan, 29-30 October 2023.

Eat Healthy – Be Active:

Food-Based Dietary Guidelines Exhibition in Bahrain

In partnership with the Ministry of Health, the WHO Country Office in Bahrain organised a five-day exhibition on the Food-Based Dietary Guidelines for the Kingdom of Bahrain from 10 to 14 December 2023 at Seef Mall, Manama. The exhibition aimed to encourage health-conscious behaviour and offer essential tips on best practices to address obesity and other risk factors associated with noncommunicable diseases.

Dr Samya Ali Bahram, Assistant Undersecretary for Public Health, and Dr Tasnim

Atatrah, WHO Representative in Bahrain, inaugurated the exhibition. The exhibition featured 11 interactive stations, each providing information on one of the Guidelines' key messages. In addition, animated videos on nutrition-based healthy lifestyle choices were displayed on digital screens, a 3D Tik-Tac-Toe game was set up to engage children and youth, and an exercise bike and Body Mass Index (BMI) scale were made accessible to promote physical activity. The exhibition attracted large-scale participation from the community from different

age groups, including five school visits.

The Food-Based Dietary Guidelines consist of 11 key messages designed to serve policymakers, health professionals, and the general public in promoting a healthy, nutritionally adequate diet. They were developed by the Ministry of Health with WHO technical support. The Guidelines were launched at the conclusion of the joint mission of the United Nations Interagency Task Force on the Prevention and Control of NCDs (UNIATF) and WHO in Bahrain in November 2021.



The Ministry of Health and WHO Country Office in Bahrain inaugurate the Food-Based Dietary Guidelines Exhibition, 10-14 December 2023.



The Food-Based Dietary Guidelines Exhibition, 10-14 December 2023



The Food-Based Dietary Guidelines Exhibition, 10-14 December 2023

Fostering Participatory Dialogue on WHO Cooperation:

The Strategic and Operational Planning Workshop

The WHO Country Office in Bahrain organised a workshop on Strategic and Operational Planning on 15 and 16 November 2023, in close collaboration with the Ministry of Health. The workshop aimed to foster a participatory dialogue on WHO's cooperation with Bahrain, including identifying core focus areas for WHO collaboration for the next three years in line with the Government Plan 2023 – 2026.

Dr Ejlal Al-Alawi, former Assistant Undersecretary for Public Health, and Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative in Bahrain, inaugurated the workshop. More than 60 technical staff from the Ministry of Health participated in the workshop, including focal points

for universal healthcare, nutrition, noncommunicable diseases, mental health, road safety, maternal and child health, and health emergencies. Experts from the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean facilitated the event.

Over two days, the workshop introduced participants to WHO's role and mandate as the lead technical agency of the United Nations responsible for public health and provided insights into its governing bodies at the global and regional levels. Additionally, it explored the organisation's key areas of work to guide the WHO Country Office's operations in and with the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Invaluable insights from the group work discussions

informed the identification of several strategic priorities for WHO support for the next three years. These include (1) promoting health through transformative action on climate change and the social determinants of health; (2) providing health through expanding coverage of essential health services to achieve universal health coverage; (3) protecting health by taking action to strengthen health emergency prevention, preparedness, response and resilience; (4) reinforcing the use of evidence from data and science and translating innovations into interventions and national decision-making; and (5) strengthening health diplomacy, collaboration and partnership as



Group picture of participants at the Strategic and Operational Planning Workshop, 15-16 November 2023.



Participants engage in group discussions during the Strategic and Operational Planning Workshop, 15-16 November 2023.

well as advocacy and strategic communications.

Similarly, the group work discussions provided an opportunity to reflect on the Ministry of Health-WHO joint work plan (JWP) activities for 2022-2023, assessing progress and agreeing on actionable recommendations to improve performance for incorporation into the JWP for 2024-2025.

This workshop served as a practical point of departure for preparing the WHO Country Office's upcoming biannual JWP with the Ministry of Health 2024-2025, ensuring that it translates their shared vision and integrates their collaborative efforts towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and the GPW13' triple billion' targets.



Dr Christoph Hamelmann, Chef de Cabinet, WHO/EMRO, during the Strategic and Operational Planning Workshop, 15-16 November 2023.



Participants engage in group discussions during the Strategic and Operational Planning Workshop, 15-16 November 2023.

SNAPSHOT

of Bahrain's Engagement in WHO Global and Regional Meetings

The WHO Country Office in Bahrain provides leadership and strategic support to drive public health impact towards achieving universal health coverage, addressing health emergencies and promoting healthier populations through strengthening Bahrain's engagement in global and regional health fora. Between July and December 2023, the WHO Country Office facilitated the participation of around 50 experts from the Ministry of Health and other health-related sectors in key global and regional WHO meetings and workshops.

Dr Habib Jawad, Malaria and Insect Control Supervisor, Ministry of Health, participates in the Workshop to Strengthen the Capacity for Morphological Identification of Primary Malaria and Dengue Vectors for High-Risk Countries, 16-20 July 2023, Muscat, Oman.



Ms Nada Mohamed, Lead Public Health Consultant, WHO Country Office in Bahrain, and Ms Sara Bahman, Communication Officer, WHO Country Office in Bahrain, participate in the Workshop on Scientific Writing and Development of Policy Brief, 4-6 July 2023, Cairo, Egypt.



Dr Adel Al-Sayyad, Chief of Disease Control Section, Public Health Directorate, Ministry of Health, participates in the Meeting on Risk Analysis of Acute Public Health Events, 19-20 September 2023, Geneva, Switzerland.



Dr Kawthar Mohamed AL-Eid, Consultant Family Medicine and Public Health-MSc Health Promotion, Head Anti-smoking Group, Diseases Control Section, Public Health Directorate, Ministry of Health; and Ms Shanine Mohebat, Health Promotion Officer, WHO Country Office in Bahrain, participate in the Pre-Tenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the WHO FCTC (Pre-COP10) and the Pre-Third Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products (Pre-MOP3) Regional Meeting, 12-14 September 2023, Amman, Jordan.



Dr Amjad Ghanem, Chief of Public Health Laboratories, Ministry of Health, participates in Meeting of directors of National Laboratory Services and partners in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, 14-16 August 2023, Cairo, Egypt.

Dr Buthaina Yusuf Ajlan, Chief of Nutrition Section, Ministry of Health, participates in the Intercountry Meeting for Nutrition Focal Points, 19- 21 September 2023, Amman, Jordan.



Ms Raja Redha Saloom, Chief of Environmental Health, Ministry of Health; Engineer Jassim Ghadeer, Environmental Specialist, Supreme Council for Environment; and Ms Nada Mohamed, Lead Public Health Consultant, WHO Country Office in Bahrain, participate in the Regional Meeting on Alliance on Transformative Action on Climate Change and Health (ATACH): Track Progress and Identify Challenges and Opportunities, 4-7 September 2023, Amman, Jordan.



Ms Fatema Jasim, Public Health Specialist, Ministry of Health, takes part in the AFP / Environmental Surveillance and Lab Directors Meeting, Group (A), 24-26 September 2023, Muscat, Oman.





Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative, Bahrain, presents as keynote speaker on Universal Healthcare during the "1st Gulf Healthcare and Sport Congress", 9-10 November 2023, Manama, Bahrain.



Dr Ghada AlZayanai, Public Health Consultant, Ministry of Health; and Dr Deena Alkamis, Public Health Officer, WHO Country Office in Bahrain, take part in the Workshop for Strengthening the Notification and Information Sharing of Acute Public Health Events, 17-19 October 2023, Cairo, Egypt.



Dr Afaf Merza Mohamed, Public Health Consultant, Ministry of Health; and Ms Qatmeer Ali Mohammed, Public Health Specialist, Ministry of Health, participate in Sub-regional Workshop for Influenza Disease Burden Estimation in the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region, 25-28 September, Cairo, Egypt.



Dr Ryan Butaita, Public Health Associate Officer, WHO Country Office in Bahrain, participates in the Regional Communications Skills Development And Learning Workshop, 12-14 December 2023, Cairo, Egypt.

Dr Ameera Ali AlNooh, Public Health Consultant and the Head of the NCDs Control Group in the Public Health Department, Ministry of Health, participates in the 28th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP 28), 30 November - 12 December 2023, Dubai, United Arab Emirates.



Dr Randah Ribhi Hamadeh, Advisor to the Dean of the College of Medicine and Medical Sciences (CMMS), Arabian Gulf University (AGU), awarded the Kuwait Cancer Control Prize, 10 October 2023, Cairo, Egypt.



Bahrain in the Seventieth Session of the WHO Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean

The 70th session of the WHO Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean (RC70) was held from 9 to 12 October in Cairo, Egypt, under the theme of “Moving forward towards a healthier future in the Eastern Mediterranean Region: Promoting, protecting and delivering health for all by all.”

To kickstart RC70, Bahrain's delegation led by H.E. Dr Jaleela bint AlSayed Jawad Hasan, Minister of Health, and Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative in Bahrain, walked alongside high-level government representatives, United Nations officials, athletes, and the community at large in the “Walk the Talk: Health for All challenge.” The walking event aimed to promote physical and mental health and celebrate the importance of partnership towards a healthier future for all.

One defining feature of RC70 was the active participation and engagement of Bahrain's delegation in discussions



H.E. Dr Jaleela bint AlSayed Jawad Hasan, Minister of Health; Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative in Bahrain; Dr Ejlal Faisal Alalawi, former Assistant Undersecretary for Public Health; and Dr Lulwa Showaiter, Former Primary Healthcare Centres Chief Executive Officer, take part in the “Walk the Talk Cairo: Health for All Challenge,” the 70th session of the WHO Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean, 9-12 October 2023, Cairo, Egypt.

on technical papers tackling urgent regional challenges — from integrating care for noncommunicable diseases in emergency settings, to strengthening public health readiness for mass gatherings,

enhancing health workforce's capacities, and galvanising action to address the links between health and climate change.

RC70 was particularly significant, marking not only the 75th anniversary of WHO's foundation in 1948 and its role in improving public health, but also the final session of Dr Ahmed Al-Mandhari as Regional Director. After concluding his tenure, Dr Ahmed Al-Mandhari will be known as Regional Director Emeritus, a title that the Regional Committee has granted in recognition of his outstanding leadership and contribution to regional and global public health.

The Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean governs WHO's work at the regional level. It convenes every year at the beginning of October and is attended by all countries of the Eastern Mediterranean Region.



H.E. Dr Jaleela bint AlSayed Jawad Hasan, Minister of Health; Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General; and Dr Ahmed Al-Mandhari, WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean, take part in the “Walk the Talk Cairo: Health for All Challenge,” the 70th session of the WHO Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean, 9-12 October 2023, Cairo, Egypt.

Maximising our Footprint on the Ground:

WHO Representative Meets with High-level Government Officials, United Nations Representatives and Health Champions

Strengthening strategic collaboration is critical to WHO's ability to implement programmes and improve health and wellbeing effectively. Between July and December 2023, Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative in Bahrain, met with several high-level government officials, United Nations representatives and health champions, elevating the strategic role of the WHO Country Office as convener, leader and facilitator to progress towards Health for All by All.



Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative in Bahrain, receives Dr Amal Al Jowder, Health Promotion Specialist, to mark her designation as WHO75 Champion for Bahrain, 27 July 2023.



Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative in Bahrain, receives Mr Abbas Almosawi, renowned Artist, to mark his designation as WHO75 Champion for Bahrain, 27 July 2023.



Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative in Bahrain, receives Ms Ruba Al-Omari, Para-athlete and Youth Champion, to mark her designation as WHO75 Champion for Bahrain, 1 August 2023.

Scan the QR code to access the WHO75 Health Champions videos on World Mental Health Day:

Dr Amal Aljowder
video



Mr Abbas Almosawi
video



Ms Ruba Al-Omari
video





Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative in Bahrain, receives H.E. Clemens Hach, Ambassador of Germany to Bahrain, in the WHO Country Office, 23 August 2023.



Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative in Bahrain, receives Dr Md. Nazrul Islam, the outgoing Ambassador of the People's Republic of Bangladesh to the Kingdom of Bahrain, in the WHO Country Office, 29 August 2023.



Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative in Bahrain, receives H.E. Heonsang Koo, the newly appointed Korean Ambassador to Bahrain, in the WHO Country Office, 29 August 2023.

Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative in Bahrain, receives H.E. Martine Kindt, the Honorary Consul of Belgium to the Kingdom of Bahrain, in the WHO Country Office, 17 October 2023.



Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative in Bahrain, receives H.E. Roderick Drummond, the outgoing British Ambassador to Bahrain, in the WHO Country Office, 3 August 2023.



Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative in Bahrain, receives H.E. Anne Jalando-On Louis, Ambassador of the Republic of the Philippines to the Kingdom of Bahrain, in the WHO Country Office, 7 September 2023.





H.E. Mr Abdullah bin Faisal bin Jabr Al Dosari, Bahrain's Ambassador to Belgium and the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg and Head of the Diplomatic Mission to the European Union, receives Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative, in the Embassy of the Kingdom of Bahrain, 20 September 2023, Brussels, Belgium.



Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative, Bahrain, participates in the WHO Representatives Retreat, the first retreat to be organized and facilitated by WRs. 26-29 November 2023, Cairo, Egypt.



Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative, Bahrain, participates in the 1st cohort of the WHO Office at the European Union in Brussels course "Leadership Dialogue on Global Health Diplomacy", 19-22 September 2023, Brussels, Belgium.

H.E. Dr Saad bin Saud Al Fuhaid, President of the Arabian Gulf University, meets with Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative in Bahrain, 13 December 2023.



Eng. Ali Ahmed Al Derazi, President of the National Institution for Human Rights, meets with Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative in Bahrain, 7 August 2023.



Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative in Bahrain, receives Dr Abdul-Majeid Haddad, Deputy Regional Director of UN Environment Programme West Asia Office, in the WHO Country Office, 7 September 2023.



Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative in Bahrain, receives Mrs Erika Broers, Acting Representative of the International Organization of Migration in Bahrain, in the WHO Country Office, 24 September 2023.





H.E. Ms Rawan bint Najeeb Tawfiqi, Minister of Youth Affairs, meets with Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative in Bahrain, 2 November 2023.



Ambassador Dr Yusuf Abdulkarim Bucheeri, Director-General of Legal Affairs and Human Rights, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, meets with Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative in Bahrain, 6 December 2023.



H.E. Dr Shaikha Rana bint Isa bin Duaij Al Khalifa, Director General of the Institute of Public Administration meets with Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative in Bahrain, 7 September 2023.

Breast Cancer Awareness Month



WHO Bahrain welcomes Dr Mariam Fida, Consultant - Medical Genetics and Preimplantation Genetic Testing (PGT) to its office for a lecture entitled 'Breast Cancer and Genetics: Key factors to promoting health and wellbeing' during Breast Cancer Awareness Month, 2 October 2023.

16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence (GBV)



The WHO Country team unites in solidarity to combat gender-based violence during "16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence", 8 December 2023.



Scan the QR code to view the WHO Bahrain team's video during the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence.

WHO Bahrain Participates in United Nations Workshop on Strategic Cooperation Framework Implementation

The WHO Country Office in Bahrain participated in a workshop held by the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) on 9 October to review and assess the implementation of the Strategic Cooperation Framework (SCF) 2021-2024 and identify lessons learned and areas for improvement.

More than 30 representatives from the 21 United Nations agencies, funds, and programmes supporting the Government of Bahrain participated in the workshop. The workshop followed a comprehensive desk

review of strategic documents, complemented by online interviews with representatives from United Nations agencies and different line ministries. These efforts were part of the independent review of SCF 2021-2024, which the UNCT has undertaken in line with the guidance provided by the United Nations Sustainable Development Group for SCFs in their penultimate year of implementation.

The independent review of SCF 2021-2024 aimed to assess the progress made towards

the achievement of the SCF outcomes, identify factors that have affected the SFC 2021-2024 contributions and provide recommendations to improve the contribution of the SFC 2021-2024, especially for incorporation into the new programming cycle.

The SCF 2021-2024 between the Kingdom of Bahrain and the United Nations guides the programmatic interventions of the UNCT in the country. While the SCF was initially intended to cover 2021-2022, it has been extended for two additional years until 31 December 2024.



Ms Nada Mohamed, Lead Public Health Consultant, WHO Country Office in Bahrain; Ms Shanine Mohebat, Health Promotion Officer, WHO Country Office in Bahrain, participate in the United Nations Workshop on Strategic Cooperation Framework Implementation, 9 October 2023. Photo Credit: UNCT Bahrain.

WHO Bahrain Celebrates The International Volunteer Day

In close collaboration with the Ministry of Youth Affairs, the WHO Country Office in Bahrain capitalised on the 'Walk the Talk' event, organised on 2 December 2023 in Sa'ada Sea Front, Muharraq, to celebrate the International Volunteer Day with Bahrani youth volunteers, recognising their role as a catalyst for positive social change. To mark the occasion, all youth volunteers received certificates of appreciation signed by Dr Tasnim Atarah, WHO Representative in Bahrain, to commend their efforts towards building a healthier, safer, and fairer world for everyone.

International Volunteer Day is celebrated on 5 December every year, and it aims to pay tribute to volunteers worldwide and to recognise the value of volunteerism in advancing peace and development.



Youth volunteers walk the talk to mark the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, 2 December 2023.



Youth volunteers walk the talk to mark the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, 2 December 2023.

WHO Bahrain Honours the Winners of the WHO75 Art Competition for School Students

To mark WHO's 75th anniversary year, the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean organised an art competition for school students to raise their awareness of health-related achievements over the years and stimulate their interest in contributing to future achievements to enhance the health and wellbeing of all.

The panel of judges at the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean selected three student winners from Bahrain: Hagar Abd Aljaleel Mansour, ranked in the 5th place among the age group category 8-9 years; Masooma Mirza, ranked in the 4th place among the age group category 16-18 years; and Fatemah Abdelhamid, who received a certificate of merit among the age group category 16-18 years.

The WHO Country Office in Bahrain and the Ministry of Health jointly recognised the outstanding achievements of the three student winners during the GCC School Health Day celebration on 2 November 2023.



Hagar Abd Aljaleel Mansour, winner of the WHO Art Competition for School Students 2023.



Masooma Mirza, winner of the WHO Art Competition for School Students 2023.



Fatemah Abdelhamid, recipient of Certificate of Merit in the WHO Art Competition for School Students 2023.

Biannual Newsletter

WHO BAHRAIN COUNTRY OFFICE



Dr Deena Al Khamis,
Public Health Officer



Ms Nada Mohamed,
Lead Public Health Consultant



Ms Shanine Mohebat,
Health Promotion Officer

Meet the Team

Inaugurated in July 2021, the WHO Country Office in Bahrain is the 20th WHO country office to open in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, and the 152nd WHO country office globally. Guided by the WHO's Thirteenth General Programme of Work, the office provides strategic and technical

support to the government to achieve universal health coverage, address health emergencies, and promote healthier populations. It collaborates with national health authorities, United Nations partners, and other health-related stakeholders to foster public health collaboration to accelerate progress towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and ensure that no one's health is left behind.



Dr Rayan Butaita,
Public Health Associate Officer



Ms Eman Saleh,
Intern



Ms Zahra Abdulla,
Administrative Assistant



Mr Elsadig Elbakri,
Senior Driver