



# WORKING ABROAD

**with MEDECINS SANS FRONTIERES**  
**Independent humanitarian and medical  
assistance for populations in need**



# WHAT IS MSF?

Médecins Sans Frontières/ Doctors Without Borders (MSF) is an international medical humanitarian organisation created by doctors and journalists in France in 1971.

Today, MSF provides independent, impartial assistance in more than 70 countries around the world to people whose survival is threatened by violence, neglect or catastrophe, primarily due to armed conflict, epidemics, malnutrition, exclusion from health-care or natural disasters. MSF provides independent, impartial assistance to those most in need. MSF also reserves the right to speak out to bring attention to neglected crises, to challenge inadequacies or abuse of the aid system, and to advocate for improved medical treatments and protocols.

In 1999, MSF received the Nobel Peace Prize.



## MSF around the world

**Afghanistan, Armenia, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, China, Colombia, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Democratic People's Republic**

**of Korea, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, Georgia, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Honduras, India, Iran, Iraq, Italy, Jordan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico,**

**Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Niger, Nigeria, Occupied Palestinian Territories, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Philippines, Russian Federation, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Swaziland,**

**Syria, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe**





James Keogh/MSF, Michael Goldfarb/MSF



## WHERE WE WORK

### Wars and conflicts

When conflicts break out, MSF sends teams of surgeons, anaesthetists, nurses and logisticians with the necessary equipment to set up operating theatres and clinics and provide basic public hygiene assistance. In cases of prolonged conflict, the team may provide basic healthcare, nutrition services and epidemic control. Projects in conflict zones are complex and are often complicated by security problems.

### Refugees and displaced people

There are more than 43 million refugees and displaced people around the world today. Most have been forced to flee their homes due to armed conflicts and food emergencies. MSF provides basic healthcare, epidemic control, immunisations, nutrition, clean water and effective sanitation systems in camps and other settings.

James Keogh/MSF

### Disasters

Following a disaster, speed is critical to the success of an emergency response. MSF has pre-packaged medical and technical kits in its warehouses and is able to dispatch them immediately to devastated areas. At the disaster site, MSF teams treat the wounded and provide medicine and medical supplies. Water and sanitation engineers and logisticians provide technical assistance.

### Long-term assistance

In countries with collapsed or inadequate healthcare systems, MSF works with local authorities to rehabilitate hospitals, establish rural clinics, run vaccination programmes and train local staff.

### Principles

**MSF's work is based on the humanitarian principles of medical ethics and impartiality. The organisation is committed to bringing quality medical care to people in crisis regardless of their race, religion or political affiliation. MSF operates independently of any political, military or religious agendas.**

### International structure

**MSF is an international movement made up of 23 associative organisations. Each association is responsible to a board of directors elected by its members (current and former field staff) during an annual general assembly. Thanks to this large network, MSF has considerable financial, human and logistical resources.**

### Funding

**More than 4.5 million individual donors around the world provide some 90 per-cent of our funding. This helps to ensure that we can operate independently and go where we are most needed. The remaining funds come from governments and international organisations.**

# WE ARE LOOKING FOR

To carry out its operations, MSF constantly recruits staff. In addition to professional skills, the qualities needed to work in the field with MSF include motivation, adaptability, teamwork, responsiveness, curiosity, the desire to learn about other cultures and respect for people, whatever their circumstances.

## Medical profiles

- General practitioners\*
- Medical specialists, *such as paediatricians, surgeons, anaesthetists, specialists in internal medicine, gynaecologists/obstetricians, psychiatrists, HIV/TB specialists, epidemiologists*
- Midwives
- Nurses *(with management experience)\**
- Mental health professionals *(psychologists and psychotherapists)*
- Laboratory technicians
- Pharmacists
- OT nurses and anaesthesia nurses

\* Profiles requiring a good command of French. Exceptions are possible for highly specialised candidates or in the case of high demand.

## Surgeons

You may work with an emergency team to treat people wounded in a conflict zone, or you may join a team providing longer-term surgical health care where people don't have access to health care. Diagnostic equipment and facilities are often limited. You may be asked to depart at very short notice to meet the needs of emergencies. Your responsibilities will include trauma surgery, general surgery and obstetrics, surgical-needs assessment and training of local staff.

## Gynaecologists/obstetricians

As an obstetrician/gynaecologist with MSF, you will work in one of more than 30 countries where MSF provides obstetric care. Every year, MSF medical teams assist at more than 100,000 deliveries, provide prevention of mother-to-child transmission care, carry out post-rape care for survivors of sexual violence, and perform surgical repair procedures for women with vaginal fistulas.

## Pharmacists

You will be responsible for managing orders, supply, inventory and the distribution of drugs and medical supplies to MSF's hospitals. You will supervise staff who distribute the drugs and may work on ordering and storing medicines. You may be asked to evaluate the availability and quality of drugs being considered for local purchase. In addition, you will work with government officials and communicate one-to-one with patients who need treatment.



Jason Van Dyke/MSF

## Non-medical profiles

- Specialists in technics and logistics\*
- Water and sanitation specialists
- Supply specialists
- Architects / construction engineers
- Motor vehicle experts
- Specialists in finance management\*
- Specialists in human resources management\*

\* Profiles requiring a good command of French. Exceptions are possible for highly specialised candidates or in the case of high demand

## Human resources specialists

You will ensure that the administration and management of international volunteers and local employees is of a high quality. Working alongside a local team, you will also be responsible for administrative matters like rent, lease or purchase agreements, insurance, travel arrangements and residence and work permits. You will oversee adherence to labour regulations, implementation of MSF internal HR guidelines, contracts, payroll, recruitment and contact with local authorities.

## Supply specialists

You will be responsible for organising local purchasing, international commissions, transportation, importation and stock management, usually in a very large and complex project. In accordance with local laws and MSF internal policies, you will ensure that all the necessary medications and non-medical supplies for the projects are available on time. You may also be responsible for training locally-hired staff.

## Logisticians with a technical background

Whether organising the transport of vaccines, rehabilitating health facilities, setting up feeding centers or overseeing the maintenance of vehicles and communication systems, logisticians are crucial to absolutely every MSF project. You may be required to interact with local authorities and other organisations and oversee the implementation of project security protocols. Being able to manage large numbers of locally-hired staff is another important element. Strong practical skills, an enjoyment of "hands on" work and a "can-do" attitude are an excellent foundation for becoming a technical logistician.

## RECRUITMENT PROCESS

1 Get informed about MSF & requirements on MSF website

2 Participate in info evening or webinar

3 Assess your motivation and skills via self assessment test

4 Send MSF application form & CV & requested documents

5 Go to test \*  
6 interview  
7 assessment centre

8 Go to preparation course  
9 matching  
10 departure-preparation

11 You are in the project!

\* (non medicals only)

# WE EXPECT

## General requirements for all profiles

- Completed vocational training and relevant expertise
- Minimum two years' relevant work experience or a completed medical specialisation
- Fluency in English; for certain profiles a good command of French is mandatory  
*(see profiles)*
- Six to twelve months' availability for the first assignment although shorter assignments are possible for surgical staff as well as for certain technical profiles
- Twelve months' commitment to work in the field or commitment for two field assignments per year
- Experience working or travelling abroad
- Tropical medicine course for GPs and nurses

## In addition to your professional skills,

a number of "soft-skills" are also required to work in the field with MSF

- Belief in the humanitarian principles of MSF
- Flexibility
- Ability to live and work as an international team
- Leadership skills
- Desire to learn about other cultures
- Respect for people, whatever their circumstances
- Ability to deal with stress
- Planning and organisational skills

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## Is it a volunteer job?

**Yes and No.** Volunteerism is a determining factor in maintaining a spirit of resistance against compromise, routine and institutionalisation. However, we believe it is important that they receive payment and a package of benefits while they are abroad. See "We offer" section for more details.

## Can I choose the country where I work?

**No.** We are looking for people who are flexible enough to go where their skills are most needed. However, MSF is an organisation based on volunteerism, and once you are offered a position, you can decide whether or not to accept it.

## Can I further my professional career within MSF?

**Yes.** We offer various training opportunities for our international staff. Your pool manager will help you design your personal career path within the organisation.

## Do you offer training positions for students?

**No.** MSF does not offer training positions. One element of an international staff member's job is to train others. Therefore, two years of relevant work experience (or a completed medical specialisation) are required.

## How long will the recruitment process take?

We recommend you apply to MSF four to six months before your actual availability. Once "in the pool", your pool manager will start to look for a position for you. The country and the timing of departure will depend on your availability, your qualifications and the needs in the field. This matching process may take several months.

## What is the average duration of an assignment?

The average duration of a first mission is between six and twelve months. Certain medical profiles and specialised technical profiles may be able to do shorter assignments, starting from four to six weeks.

# WE OFFER

- **Employment contract with a gross salary of currently between 800 and 1000 euros per month**
  - **Payment of specific vaccination and visa costs during preparation for your assignment**
  - **Payment of travel costs, living expenses, accommodation and meals during employment**
  - **Insurance package** (health, disability, travel, luggage, accident, and return to home country insurance)
  - **Preparation course before the first assignment, and further training courses for staff members after their first assignment**
  - **A professional career path within MSF**
- We guarantee**
- **A unique personal and professional challenge and inter-cultural experience**
- Attention:** Please note that MSF does not cover any costs for travel and accommodation related to the tests, interview and assessment centers.

J.Sam Phillips/MSF



# INTERNATIONAL STAFF-PORTRAITS



**Daniel Mic**  
 medical coordinator, Romania, with MSF since 1999  
**“Working as a medical doctor with MSF, you should expect to be flexible and use all your clinical skills at an intense level in order to adapt to every day challenges. Your humanity and your humour are indispensable for your patients, but also for your team.”**



**Virág Viniczai**  
 supply specialist, Hungary, with MSF since 2012  
**“Doing supply at MSF means team-work, collaboration and creativity. Supply provides all the necessary items for the project, working closely with logisticians, finance colleagues and the medical team. We all share the same important goal: to serve the people in need. Working in Haiti as part of the supply team was a real challenge for me, but seeing the hospital provide lifesaving services for children, mothers and anyone in need was a true reward for all our efforts.”**



**Pavel Dacko**  
 logistician, Czech Republic, with MSF since 2009  
**„I call being an MSF logistician a ‘for the first time’ job: you always have to deal with situations that you have never faced before. Ensuring that our medical teams work in the best possible conditions is surely challenging and sometimes exhausting, but extremely rewarding. Making sure that supplies arrive on time, that cars move, that there is enough water to drink, electricity in the hospital and that we have enough latrines is just a small sample of this job’s reality. My suggestion: try it out to see what it’s all about.”**



**Danijel Bešić**  
 orthopaedic surgeon, Slovenia, with MSF since 2010  
**“Working with MSF in Nigeria was my best personal and professional experience so far; in the role of MSF surgeon I found out the real meaning of helping injured people and saving lives...”**



**Daniela Ferrari**  
 HR coordinator, Austria, with MSF since 2007  
**“Local staff are MSF’s most important asset. They are the ones who will continue the projects when MSF leaves. International staff have responsibility for training local staff, many of whom have been confronted by war and could not complete their education. As HR coordinator, I am responsible for identifying training possibilities and supporting team leaders in their daily management and training tasks. Promoting local staff to management positions is one of my beautiful mission experiences.”**

**„Working with MSF in Nigeria was my best personal and professional experience so far.“**

Danijel Bešić, Orthopedic Surgeon

# MSF'S CHARTER

**Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders (MSF) is a private international association. The association is made up mainly of doctors and health sector workers and is also open to all other professions which might help in achieving its aims. All of its members agree to honour the following principles:**

**Médecins Sans Frontières provides assistance to populations in distress, to victims of natural or man-made disasters and to victims of armed conflict. They do so irrespective of gender, race, religion, creed or political convictions.**

**Médecins Sans Frontières observes neutrality and impartiality in the name of universal medical ethics and the right to humanitarian assistance and claims full and unhindered freedom in the exercise of its functions.**

**Members undertake to respect their professional code of ethics and to maintain complete independence from all political, economic or religious powers.**

**As volunteers, members understand the risks and dangers of the missions they carry out and make no claim for themselves or their assigns for any form of compensation other than that which the association might be able to afford them.**

**Recruiting website: [www.msf.at/work-with-us](http://www.msf.at/work-with-us) email: [hrm.vienna@vienna.msf.org](mailto:hrm.vienna@vienna.msf.org)**

