

# JPO Story: tackling Tuberculosis from WHO Headquarters, Geneva

## Background

I have a Bachelors in Economics and Social Sciences and a Masters in Economics and Management of the Public Sector and International Organizations, earned from Bocconi University and Sciences Po Paris. I am currently finishing my long-distance Masters in Public Health.

I applied to the JPO Programme as it seemed a great occasion to enhance my career with international organizations and as an entry point, counting on the support the programme offers through its trainings to strengthen my knowledge.



*Marzia Calvi is an Italian-sponsored JPO working at WHO Headquarters in Geneva.*

## Assignment

I am a technical officer in the Global Tuberculosis (TB) Programme at WHO Headquarters where I work on Policies, Strategies and Innovation to end the TB epidemic by 2030. I joined right before two unprecedented meetings and I started to work in the Secretariat for the Moscow first Ministerial Meeting 2017 and the UNGA high-level meeting on TB 2018. Following the resolution approved in NY, I focused on developing a multisectoral accountability framework for TB (MAF-TB) and I am supporting countries in adapting and implementing this framework. I travelled in long missions to Cambodia, Namibia and soon Indonesia to support this work. I am also working on the development and analysis of a multidimensional assessment based on the support plans of the TB high burden countries (internal investment case) to quantify the approach as to how best to go about achieving the acceleration needed over the years to successfully meet the End TB Strategy targets.

I had the pleasure to work on many different projects and with many different stakeholders, from patients' groups and civil society to ministers and presidents thanks to the unprecedented high-level meetings the department experienced in the last 3 years. To me, the most challenging and rewarding part is the work done on a regular basis and the review missions of national programmes to support the TB national departments identify, assess and act on the gaps, build on success and exploit possible opportunities while avoiding risks in implementing or revising the national strategic plans.



It is a very intense exercise which includes preparing in advance at HQ and then being totally immersed in a country and its complexities for around 20 days. Along with national and international reviewers, I would interview key stakeholders and analyse data in order to formulate sound and actionable recommendations on my topic areas (health financing, systems/programme management and multisectoral accountability mainly). When back from mission, the work is not finished and it includes summarizing the many findings and proposal in a report, and also supporting the country to follow up on the recommendations.

I think the JPO assignment gave me a great opportunity to be recognized as a professional in the UN environment and allowed me to sit at the table, strengthening my competence and learning from top professionals. I learned rules and procedures that no book teaches you and I experienced teamwork, creating a heterogeneous network of colleagues I can always refer to in case of challenging tasks.

### **Advice to prospective candidates**

Country offices, regional ones and HQ are very different, and it is important for a JPO (and any staff consultant) to understand where they are working. Allow yourself the curiosity and time to understand what is requested by your office before giving 100% of your energy and knowledge to fulfil the organization's/team goals.

*Being a JPO is great opportunity to get to know yourself better when faced with the privilege and the duties of working for the causes you're passionate about, serving the vulnerable.*

