Volunteerism and Universal Health Coverage

How can we harness the potential of skilled volunteers to achieve Universal Health Coverage?
Universal Health Coverage is defined as “access to adequate healthcare for all at an affordable price”
Worldwide, over one billion people still cannot use the health services they need because they are either unavailable or unaffordable.

An estimated 800 women die each day during pregnancy and child birth mainly due to poor access to proper health care.
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57 countries fell below the critical threshold of 2.3 physicians, nurses and midwives per 1,000 population, considered generally necessary to achieve an acceptable level of coverage of essential health services. (World Health Report 2006)
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Key to achieving Universal Health Coverage is the expansion of the network of health providers and health institutions.
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Trained volunteers play an essential role in bridging the last mile between access to health care and the most remote communities and marginalized groups.
Volunteers deliver a variety of crucial and culturally sensitive health promotion messages, and increase local access to lifesaving curative measures.
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Volunteerism can deliver **benefits** to health service users and bring benefits to the broader health systems.
Volunteerism requires investment, support and well planned approaches to

- engagement,
- management and
- retention
Volunteerism providing critical health services must be recognized formally, if it is to be sustained.
Governments can promote legislation, policy and other strategies that reduce barriers to the participation of volunteers and instead enable volunteerism and promote it socially.
There is no one government, corporate sector or civil society organization that can solve our most pressing development challenges alone. Multi-stakeholders partnerships are essential.
Working together towards Universal Health Coverage