

Stefaan Van Bastelaere, President; Ms. Magalie Schotte, Coordinator

Be-cause health
c/o Institute of Tropical Medicine Nationalestraat 155
2000 Antwerp

Subject: Application for membership in Be-cause health

Dear Mr. President, Madam Coordinator,

West Bengal Voluntary Health Association (WBVHA) established in 1974 is a charitable, non-profit making and secular organization - a state-level health-promoting agency is motivated to partner with Because Health (a Belgian platform) to improve access to affordable, sustainable, and quality healthcare in unserved/underserved rural areas and strengthen its capacity to work closely with local, state, and international bodies for better, equitable health outcomes, through the memberships.

WBVHA collaborates with international and community-based organisations to implement the Basic Health Care Support Programme (BHCSP), a long-standing initiative in India recognized and supported by Memisa Belgium as a model of excellence in strengthening local health systems, which focuses on empowering communities to take responsibility for their own health, including managing, accessing, and facilitating quality care. Partnerships help strengthen health service providers, increase community awareness, and link marginalized communities to government health systems, rather than creating a parallel system.

Memisa acknowledges the BHCSP's success primarily through sustained partnership and high-level diplomatic visibility. The programme's 20-year journey and its "comprehensive approach"—which goes beyond mere service delivery to include community emergency funds and social issues—has been documented in academic and institutional publications like "Sailing Below the Waves" to serve as a blueprint for other regions by the Institute of Tropical Medicine, Antwerp.

In this respect, WBVHA aligns with Be-Cause Health's mission by providing comprehensive primary healthcare that is accessible, equitable, and sustainable by fostering collaboration, knowledge sharing, and advocacy to support health systems, aiming to improve international health.

The Basic Health Care Support (BHCS) Programme represents a significant, community-based approach to strengthening health systems – a unique model that focuses on viewing health as a human right and works by addressing the broader determinants of health through community engagement and is lauded for being "responsive with dignity," ensuring that even the most remote vulnerable populations receive quality care, which WBVHA proposes to share with Be-cause Health members.

The Be-cause health platform facilitates fruitful exchange for its members by acting as a pluralistic, open, and informal network and focuses on bridging the gap between research and practice in resource-limited settings. WBVHA agrees with these and is willing to become a member, which helps to bridge the gaps between WBVHA and specialised organisations, allowing for the sharing of expertise, training materials, and resources. While remaining at the disposal of your Ethics Committee and awaiting its decision, WBVHA remain, Mr. President, Madam Coordinator,

Yours sincerely,

Mr. Biswanath Basu, Project Director