

ENGAGE INTERNSHIP

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Editor's Letter

Welcome to the eighth edition of the EMPHNET Internship Program "Engage" Newsletter!

In this issue, we proudly share the inspiring journey of Abeer Ismail and how she started as an intern and became an employee, all amidst the conflict in Gaza. Her story exemplifies resilience and dedication. We also celebrate the graduation of our largest and most diverse cohorts, highlighting the potential of our future public health leaders.

You'll also find updates on the activities of our current interns and alumni, their contributions to public health, and more. Additionally, we feature testimonials from former interns and insights from first-time mentors.

We hope this newsletter inspires you and showcases the incredible impact of our interns worldwide.

ENGAGE Editorial Team



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Feature Story

A Story of Resilience: Abeer's Journey from Intern to Employee Amidst War in Gaza



Since October 2023, Gaza has been a battleground ravaged by crises and leaving countless dead people and injured. The ongoing conflict created an environment where daily survival is uncertain and pursuing educational and professional aspirations seems nearly impossible. Amidst this turmoil, Abeer Ismail, a dedicated public health worker, faced the daunting challenge of continuing her work and education while dealing with personal losses, injuries, and a lack of safety.

Despite immense challenges, Abeer remained determined to advance her career. In February 2024, she was accepted into EMPHNET's Internship Program "Engage" where she joined the Public Health Emergency Management Center (PHEMC). Motivated by her friend, Dalia El Nahal, Abeer decided to apply. The application process was difficult due to unreliable internet access and the danger of moving between locations in search for a better connection.

During her internship, Abeer exhibited remarkable resilience. She worked on emergency response plans, conducted interviews with pregnant women and people with disabilities, and she contributed to the Emergency Bulletins produced by EMPHNET's Emergency Management Center (PHEMC). Her commitment to her duties often required her to seek out journalists for internet access or to venture out to other locations in order to stay connected with her mentor, PHEMC's Director, Dr. Haitham Bashier.

"When I got my acceptance with email from EMPHNET, I was very happy especially that it was an emergency-related internship, and I was living in an emergency," Abeer shared. "The internship made me busy, and it enabled me to focus more on the future and the change I can make."



Abeer's perseverance paid off as she successfully completed her internship, gaining valuable skills and experience in public health emergencies. She completed training modules covering Principles of Public Health Emergency Management and Health Project Management and she played a pivotal role in developing videos that highlighted the public health crises in Gaza. Her work made a significant impact, as it showcased the realities faced by vulnerable populations during the war. Abeer's dedication did not go unnoticed. Following her internship, she was offered a position with EMPHNET, allowing her to continue her work on the ground. Reflecting on her journey, Abeer said:

"If you're going through hell, keep going. Never give up, never surrender. This experience gave me a sense of hope and resilience."

The challenges Abeer faced during her internship were daunting. ***"Transportation, internet connection, safety—there was no humanitarian area at all back then. Everywhere was not safe. I was scared,"*** Abeer recalled. The constant threat of violence and bombings made it difficult to conduct

fieldwork and attend meetings. Following one of her sessions with her mentor, Abeer was injured by fragments while returning home.

Adding to the physical dangers were the emotional and psychological burdens. ***"The loss of loved ones and moving from one place to another to seek a safer place caused emotional distress and fear of death. People I used to work with all passed away. No one is left, everyone is gone,"*** she said.

Throughout her internship, Abeer received support from her team at EMPHNET. ***"The team was very supportive,"*** she said. This supportive network played a crucial role in helping Abeer navigate the challenges she faced.

Abeer's internship was marked by significant efforts and achievements. Alongside the above-mentioned efforts, Abeer also collaborated with volunteers on health promotion initiatives. ***"I felt like I needed to be responsible and to take more action,"*** she reflected. ***"The internship experience not only sharpened my technical skills, but it also deepened my understanding of the complexities involved in safeguarding public health during crises."***

Moving forward, Abeer aims to use her experience to assume leadership roles and contribute to the broader public health sector in Gaza. Her journey through the internship has not only fortified her resolve but it also inspired her to advocate for women in leadership positions within her community. Abeer’s story is a testament to the power of resilience and collective action in the face of adversity.

Her next steps involve continuing her work with EMPHNET, focusing on health promotion, WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene), and malnutrition campaigns, while also supporting future interns and young professionals navigating similar challenges.

Looking back, Abeer feels that her decision to complete the internship during the war was the right one.

“I don’t know how to say, it was the right decision- I believe so. I’m not a quitter. I think it’s because I really wanted to learn and get experience to benefit myself and others around me,” she said.

The experience taught her valuable lessons about resilience and perseverance. ***“I would like to thank everyone who helped me during this period, especially Dr. Haitham, my team, the internship program and EMPHNET... the environment is very supportive and friendly. If it wasn’t like this, I wouldn’t have completed the internship.”*** Abeer highlighted that other interns were also supportive, and she enjoyed meeting them in the interns’ biweekly meetings and hearing about the work and sharing what she has been working on.



Abeer’s journey from an intern amidst war to a valued employee at EMPHNET highlights the extraordinary resilience and dedication of individuals committed to public health, even in the most challenging circumstances. Her story serves as an inspiration to others, demonstrating that with determination, support, and a belief in the power of collective action, it is possible to overcome even the most formidable obstacles.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Check out our new initiative: **“Gaza Health Chronicles: Inside the Crisis”**

Gaza Health Chronicles:
Inside the Crisis

Celebrations

Celebrating the Graduation of 19 Interns from EMPHNET’s Internship Program



EMPHNET proudly celebrated the graduation of 19 interns from the 2024 “Engage” Internship Program cohorts 1 and 2, marking the largest and most diverse cohorts to date. These cohorts included interns from a variety of educational and professional backgrounds, bringing unique perspectives and skills to the program.

The graduation ceremony highlighted the interns’ achievements and experiences. Attendees, both physically at EMPHNET’s HQ Office in Amman, Jordan and online from their respective countries, presented their work, shared challenges, and celebrated accomplishments with EMPHNET’s senior management and mentors. The event featured speeches by EMPHNET’s Executive Director, Dr. Mohannad Al Nsour; the Media, Communication and Networking Team Leader, Dana Shalabi; and the Media Communication and Networking Officer and Internship Coordinator, Meral Al-Gunaid.

In his speech, Dr. Mohannad congratulated the interns on completing their training, attributing the program’s success to the mentors’, Engage

team’s hard work, and the interns’ dedication. He praised the mentors for their invaluable contributions, despite their busy schedules, and he acknowledged their role in ensuring a smooth and fruitful journey for the interns. Dr. Mohannad expressed pride in the alumni’s achievements, and he stated that he looks forward to the graduates’ future milestones.

“Today doesn’t just mark the end of your time as interns with us; it also signals the start of a new chapter in your professional journey.”

Dana praised the interns for their achievements and resilience, highlighting the value of their diverse backgrounds. She thanked the mentors for their dedication and support and expressed excitement for the graduates’ bright futures while encouraging them to use their skills and experiences to make impactful contributions.

Meral gave an overview of the two cohorts and thanked the interns and mentors for their hard work and dedication. She noted that the program received **242 applications**, out of which **21 interns were accepted**, and

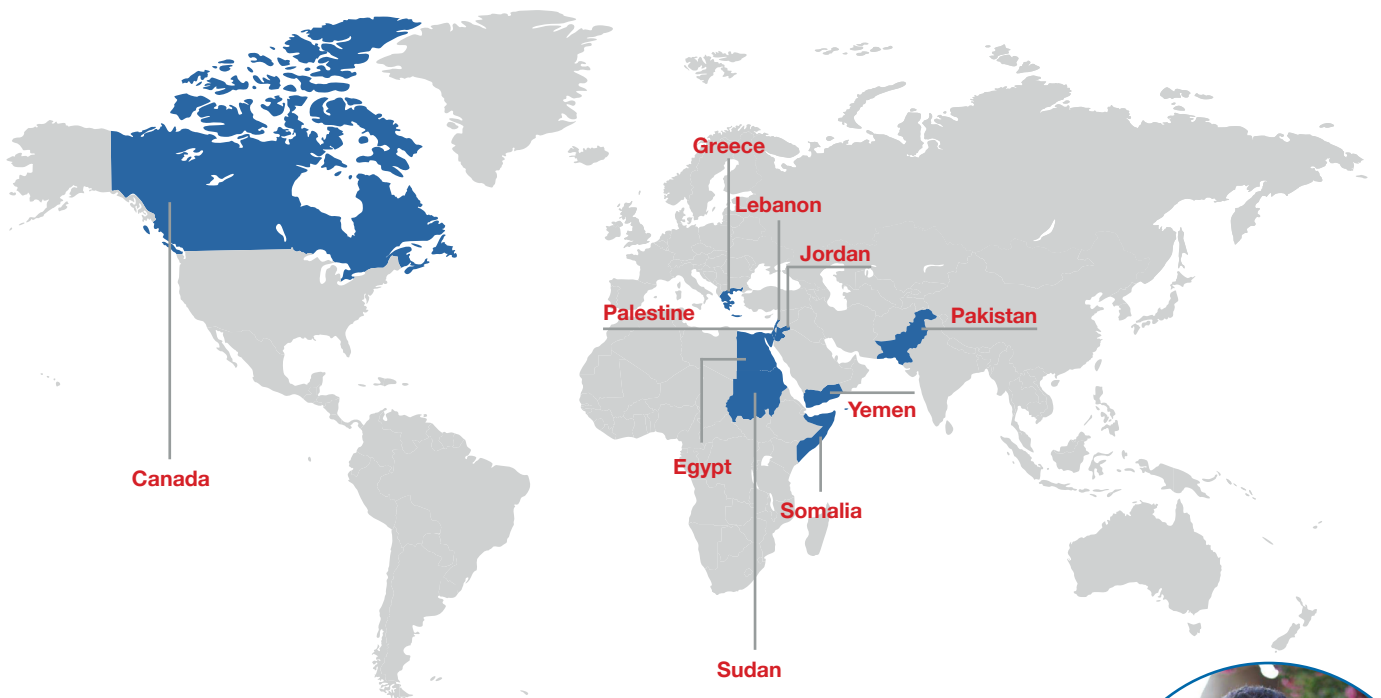
19 successfully completed the program, and one intern has already been hired at EMPHNET. The internship program involved **nine different units**, and **four new mentors joined the program for the first time.**

The dedication and hard work of these interns set a high standard for future cohorts. EMPHNET looks forward to hearing more about the contributions that these graduates will make in their respective fields.

The cohorts were diverse, with interns from Canada, Egypt, Greece, Jordan, Lebanon, Pakistan, Palestine, Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen. This environment enriched the learning experience and promoted cross-cultural collaboration.

In closing we congratulate all the graduates of 2024. Your achievements reflect your resilience and dedication to public health. We wish you all the best in your future endeavors and are confident that you will continue to make a positive impact.

EMPHNET Interns: A Global Representation



Testimonials of Former Interns

“I started this internship looking for a resource of knowledge that would amplify my capabilities in public health, and I am pleased to have found that and more. The EMPHNET team has shown impressive professionalism and hospitality throughout the internship. Even though it was remote, I was always able to be in touch with the team for any inquiries I had. Meral made sure that we were informed and up to date with our tasks, and always showed a high level of commitment and consistency with all the relevant procedures.

Dr. Tarek has been a force of knowledge and improvement during the internship. It has been great to work under him, specifically on bacterial meningitis. Dr. Tarek possesses expansive information and work in the field, thus sharing this experience with him is a stepping stool for a novice.”

*- Disease Control and Prevention Intern,
Ali Sherri*



Following Up on Our Interns

In this section, we spotlight the recent activities and achievements of our Engage interns and alumni who are showcasing their contributions and involvement in various public health initiatives.

Our current intern, Dr. Faaraea Haroon who is interning with the Partnership and Resource Mobilization Unit participated in a workshop under the title “Advanced Rapid Response Training Package Adaptation” that was held in Islamabad, Pakistan in May 2024.



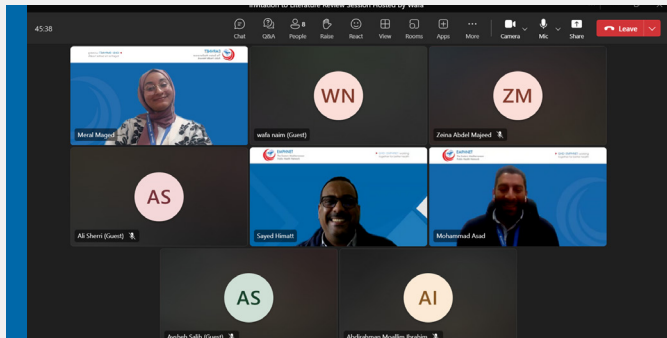
Our Engage Alumna, Dr. Entisar Omar who interned with the Workforce Capacity Unit supported our work in Qatar by facilitating a workshop for the project “Competency Needs Assessment for Public Health Emergency Management Among the Health and Non-health Sectors” in June 2024.

Our Engage Alumni, Dr. Ahmed Mohammad and Dr. Abdirhaman Ibrahim, who both interned with the Polio and Routine Immunization Unit, co-facilitated a consultative workshop on finalizing the validation tool for “Routine Immunization Microplanning” in Somalia in May 2024.



Our Engage Alumnus, Dr. Abdirhaman got selected for the Noncommunicable Diseases Mini-Grants Initiative that was launched by the Eastern Mediterranean Non-Communicable Disease Research and Prevention Center ([NCDsRC](#)) at EMPHNET . He was selected with other eight grantees who have proposed innovative projects aimed at generating operational and implementation research on NCDs in the EMR. Congratulations to Dr. Abdirhaman!

Our Engage Alumna, Dr. Wafa Ibrahim, who interned with the One Health Unit and is currently interning with the MERS-CoV, EPP, WHO Geneva, Switzerland, met our Executive Director, Dr. Mohammad Al-Nsour during the Seventy-seventh World Health Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland, from May 27th to June 1st, 2024.



Additionally, Dr. Wafa hosted and organized a session on Literature Review for her fellow interns and EMPHNET staff during her internship in February 2024.

Our Engage Alumna, Sana Daoud, who interned with the Media, Communications, and Networking Team participated in a seminar titled “Utilizing Artificial Intelligence Tools in Healthcare and Medical Research” with her mentor in January 2024.



Our Engage Alumnus, Dr. Mohammad Al-Zoubi, who interned with the Research and Policy team, participated in conducting interviews with teachers of the host and refugee communities in Jordan as part of the implementation research for the Integral NCD-Humanitarian Response project in December 2023.

These updates reflect the dedication and impact of our interns and alumni in advancing public health initiatives across the globe.

Mentorship Corner

Navigating First-Time Mentorship Experience with Five New Engage Mentors

This section showcases the experiences of five first-time mentors at EMPHNET, highlighting their journeys, challenges, and mutual benefits. Each mentor shares their unique approach and insights, emphasizing the importance of effective communication, flexibility, and tailored mentoring.

**Senior Technical Officer,
Nadine El-Haddad**



Nadine ElHaddad, a public health specialist and a first-time mentor at EMPHNET shares her experience, challenges, and advice for future mentors, providing a comprehensive look at what it means to guide and support emerging public health professionals.

Inspiration and Goals

Nadine was driven by a desire to bridge gaps in knowledge and to support public health initiatives in regions that need it the most. This

motivation led her to mentor two interns from Somalia. Reflecting on her journey, Nadine shared,

“This was a new experience for me, especially for interns coming from a country that we know needs a lot of technical support. We don’t fully understand the cultural, political, and health context there, and working closely with people from those regions helps us identify real problems and areas for improvement.”

She saw mentorship as a chance to work closely with local professionals, understand their real challenges, and identify areas for improvement. Nadine hoped to bridge gaps in understanding and provide practical support where it was most needed.

Mentoring Experience

Nadine mentored two interns, Dr. Ahmed Mohammad and Dr. Abdirahman Ibrahim, both from Somalia. The focus was on understanding and improving the immunization situation in the country. Ahmed worked on projects related to the Hirshabelle state, while Abdirahman tackled tasks at the national level.

Nadine was impressed by their commitment; despite the challenges they faced while working virtually on internship-related tasks and balancing their academic and professional requirements. She noted,

“We identified gaps and areas for improvement, while working on relevant material at both the national and state levels.”

When talking about her mentees, Nadine said Ahmed was particularly eager to learn more about EMPHNET and he continued to seek support beyond the internship period. This drive helped Nadine better support the country and foster long-lasting relationships with the mentees.

Preparation and Approach

While Nadine had previous mentoring experience, she faced new challenges in the virtual environment.

“I already had experience, but this was my first time mentoring virtually,” Nadine shared. “I had to adapt to the new format and to find ways in which I can provide support remotely.”

Despite the challenges, Nadine found ways to offer guidance and support by providing detailed feedback and encouraging autonomy.

Tailoring the Mentorship

Recognizing that each mentee had unique needs, Nadine tailored her approach accordingly. For Abdirahman, who was working on his master’s thesis, she provided academic-oriented support and constructive feedback. For Ahmed, who worked with the community, she encouraged him to find gaps in the literature and to think critically about his work. Nadine ensured that her mentees were engaged in activities that aligned with their interests and career goals.

Mutual Benefits and Growth

Nadine emphasized the reciprocal nature of the relationship. While she provided valuable

practical experience and guidance to her mentees, she also learned about the unique contexts and challenges faced in Somalia. This experience allowed her to refresh her knowledge and gain new insights.

“I learned a lot about the context in Somalia and the specific challenges they face...It was about ensuring that the mentees gained experience and knowledge, while I also grew in my leadership role”, Nadine shared.

Personal Growth and Advice

Reflecting on her experiences, Nadine advised future mentors to be flexible and adaptive. She added,

“Don’t be too rigid. Adapt your approach based on the mentee’s needs and be transparent about the process.”

Future Plans and Recommendations

Looking ahead, Nadine expressed a willingness to mentor again, given the right circumstances and project needs. She highlighted the support she received from the ENGAGE program and added,

“The program is being run in a way that doesn’t show preference or prejudice to the mentors or the interns, it is balanced.”

By sharing her experiences and insights, Nadine has provided a roadmap for future mentors. Her dedication to bridging knowledge gaps, adapting to new challenges, and fostering growth in her mentees underscores the importance of mentorship in the field of public health.

Public Health Specialist, Dr. Sayed Himatt



Dr. Sayed Himatt, a seasoned Public Health Professional, brings his expertise to his role as a mentor at EMPHNET. Focusing on communicable disease control, epidemic intelligence, IHR (2005), One Health, and mass gatherings, he is currently promoting the One Health approach in the EMR. Dr. Sayed has mentored three interns and is currently mentoring two more.

Inspiration and Goals

When asked what inspired him to become a mentor, Dr. Sayed shared,

“It was my personal interest and love for guiding, directing, and empowering others. The structured environment at EMPHNET provided clear guidance on what is needed, which encouraged me to take on a mentee. This role not only helps others but also enriches the unit and builds my capacity as a mentor.”

Mentoring Experience

Talking about his mentees, Dr. Sayed was proud when mentioning Dr. Wafa Ibrahim, who he mentored and worked together with on a comprehensive stakeholder analysis for EMPHNET and adapted the NCAP process to assess country capacities for One Health. He mentioned that Dr. Wafa’s experience in research and data organization significantly contributed to their projects.

Preparation and Approach

To prepare for his mentorship role, Dr. Sayed read guides and forms and reflected on the skills he could help his intern develop. He also thought of tools he can use to better the communication process with his interns. He aimed to expose interns to the dynamic environment of meetings, technical aspects, and knowledge sharing.

“I found that one-on-one meetings were crucial for discussing objectives and technical topics,” he said.

Building Trust

Dr. Sayed emphasized the importance of active listening and respect in building trust with mentees.

“Active listening encourages interns to share their ideas and concerns, while professional respect fosters a positive relationship.”

Customized Mentoring

Recognizing that each mentee is unique, Dr. Sayed tailored his approach to meet individual needs. Some interns preferred clear, step-by-step tasks, while others benefited from regular brainstorming sessions.

“Understanding each intern’s preferred working style and adapting accordingly is essential,” he noted.

Overcoming Challenges

Time constraints posed a significant challenge during the mentorship. Dr. Sayed managed this by prioritizing his mentee’s tasks and improving his time management skills. He acknowledged that mentees also face competing priorities, such as university work or part-time jobs, which can affect their internship performance.

Mutual Benefits

Dr. Sayed believes mentorship is a two-way street. He ensured both parties gained from the relationship by regularly asking mentees about their goals and the benefits they were receiving.

“The quality of the work produced, and the feedback received are clear indicators of mutual benefit,” he observed.

Personal Growth and Advice

Reflecting on his experience, Dr. Sayed noted his growth in managing remote work, time management, and communication. He encourages others to become mentors, highlighting the rewarding nature of the experience.

Future Plans and Recommendations

Dr. Sayed is eager to continue mentoring, while focusing on improving communication skills to prevent miscommunication. He suggests that EMPHNET’s ENGAGE program could further support first-time mentors with mentorship training, hosting focus groups, and developing practical guidelines.

“Closing the feedback loop is crucial for both interns and mentors to understand and learn from evaluations,” he concluded.



Testimonials of Former Interns



“My internship at EMPHNET was an extremely valuable and enriching experience that provided me with practical knowledge and insights into the operations of the organization. This opportunity allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of various Public Health Programs and units in the organization, and to learn from a highly supportive and professional environment.

In particular, my work with the “One Health” unit allowed me to acquire valuable insights, knowledge, and skills that I thoroughly enjoyed. My mentor set high standards and consistently demonstrated respect, politeness, and unwavering support, serving as a role model for me. I was also impressed by the commitment of the organization to involve interns in activities and provide training programs, creating a supportive working environment.”

- One Health Intern,
Wafa Ibrahim



Polio and Immunization Specialist, Dr. Najwa Jarour



Dr. Najwa Jarour, a former supervisor and mentor, found herself in a pivotal role at EMPHNET due to urgent technical follow-up needs in Sana'a, Yemen. Her expertise in immunization and public health efforts has been crucial for supporting some of the activities remotely, such as training and meetings targeting grassroots or frontline health care workers and community volunteers in some countries, particularly the initiatives undertaken by EMPHNET in Yemen.

Inspiration and Goals

Reflecting on her decision to become a mentor, Dr. Najwa explained,

“In Sana'a, we lacked a technical person to oversee our activities in my absence. Travel constraints made it challenging to provide on-site support consistently and mentoring offered an opportunity to build capacity locally and support Ministry of Public Health and Population initiatives.”

Mentoring Experience

Dr. Najwa mentored Manal Mahsoon, a capable Field Epidemiology Training Programs (FETP) graduate with a strong background in epidemiology and laboratory work. Together, they focused on immunization projects, including training on polio village volunteers and reviewing the progress of the project outcome to ensure effective community Engagement in supporting polio eradication in Yemen.

“Manal’s openness, communication skills, and strong work ethic were invaluable,” she noted.

Preparation and Approach

To prepare for mentoring, Dr. Najwa collaborated closely with Manal, leveraging tools like WhatsApp for communication and establishing clear workflows. In addition of coordination and technical meetings with Polio Village Volunteers (PVV) coordinators in Yemen. She mentioned that Manal’s proactive approach helped streamline the internship experience.

Customized Mentoring

Understanding mentees’ unique needs is crucial for Dr. Najwa. She observed,

“Manal thrived with clear directives and structured tasks, which allowed her to excel in her roles.”

Overcoming Challenges

Dr. Najwa faced challenges typical of remote mentorship, including time constraints and communication barriers. However, she shared that she was able to navigate them by prioritizing tasks and improving virtual communication channels.

Mutual Benefits and Growth

Both mentor and mentee benefited from the relationship. Dr. Najwa acknowledged,

“Manal’s insights and dedication enhanced our project outcomes, while I gained fresh perspectives and insights from her experiences.”

Personal Growth and Advice

Reflecting on her experience, Dr. Najwa advised future mentors to have clear objectives, guidelines, expectations, mentorship goals, and task outlines for effective guidance.

Future Plans and Recommendations

Dr. Najwa expressed openness to future mentorship opportunities, particularly if there is a clear need and adequate time for face-to-face interactions. She suggested improving mentorship guidelines and support through the Engage program.

By adapting her approach to Manal’s needs and focusing on effective communication, Dr. Najwa successfully navigated the challenges of remote mentoring, ensuring both professional development and project success.

ANNOUNCEMENT

We are looking for an Alumni with excellent Arabic presentation skills to MC our Eighth EMPHNET Regional Conference in Amman, Jordan in September!

If you are interested, please reach out to internships@emphnet.net



Testimonials of Former Interns



“I started my training as part of my university practicum, and it was interesting and enjoyable. I discussed various topics related to my field of interest such as learning management systems and storyboards. My internship at EMPHNET gave me a good and different experience than what I already had.”

*- Electronic Learning and Training Intern,
Mutasim Abuaysh*



**Communication Specialist,
Ms. Ala' Kharabsheh**



Ms. Ala' Kharabsheh, a communication specialist, found herself overwhelmed by a project's demands. This situation prompted her to become a mentor, seeking both support and the opportunity to foster new talent within EMPHNET.

Inspiration and Goals

Ala reflected on her motivation to mentor, stating,

"I was overwhelmed with a project and there was a need for additional support, and the internship program provided an opportunity to identify and cultivate potential future team members."

Her goal was to identify mentees with strong health educational backgrounds and good communication skills and considering them as potential assets for the team.

Mentoring Experience

Ala mentored Sanaa Dawoud, a fresh graduate from JUST who was active and passionate about health. Sanaa's background closely aligned with

the needs of the project at hand, making her an ideal candidate.

"She was active and willing to learn, which made the mentoring process smooth and effective," Ala noted.

Preparation and Approach

To prepare for her mentoring role, Ala relied on the mentor guide provided by the internship program, which offered a clear framework for the mentorship process. She also used the objectives form to set clear goals and expectations with Sanaa.

Customized Mentoring

Ala tailored her mentoring approach to suit the unique needs of her mentee. She emphasized the importance of giving her space to work independently while being available for guidance when needed.

"I gave her space to work and encouraged her to be proactive. This approach helped her develop confidence and initiative," she shared.

Mutual Benefits and Growth

Ala ensured that both she and her mentee benefited from the relationship.

"Sanaa gained a valuable experience working in a public health organization. For me, the mentorship experience enhanced my accountability, responsibility, and leadership skills."

Challenges

One challenge Ala faced was managing time, as the internship period was short, and her mentee soon got a job offer. Despite this, Sanaa's positive attitude and flexibility helped them navigate the situation effectively.

Personal Growth and Advice

Reflecting on her experience, Ala advised future mentors to maintain a friendly and open relationship with their mentees. She emphasized the importance of avoiding excessive formalities and fostering a two-way street for learning and growth.

ENGAGE program offer a comprehensive plan, including fieldwork and activities, to maximize the benefits the internship offers.

By focusing on effective communication, flexibility, and tailored mentoring approaches, Ala successfully navigated the challenges of his mentorship role, ensuring mutual growth and project success.


Future Plans and Recommendations

Ala expressed willingness to mentor again, provided there is an opportunity and a clear need. Additionally, she recommended that the

ANNOUNCEMENT

We are now Accredited by the Agency for Public Health Education Accreditation (APHEA)!

Stay Tuned for more exciting news!



APHEA

Accredited Continuing Training & Educational Event



Testimonials of Former Interns



“My experience at EMPHNET has truly been exceptional. I had the pleasure of meeting wonderful individuals who were not only kind but also filled with energy and passion for their work. This positive environment had a significant impact on both my professional and personal demeanour.

Working on the EpiNews platform opened my eyes to numerous health news stories that I was not aware of, especially in countries that are not adequately covered. I discovered diseases that were previously unknown to me during my studies in emergency medical services.”

*- Media, Communications, and Networking Intern,
Sana Dawoud*



Technical Officer, Leen Daoud



Leen Daoud, a public health specialist, embarked on her mentoring journey at EMPHNET with the goal of sharing her practical experience in the field and providing hands-on learning opportunities for interns.

Inspiration and Goals

Reflecting on what inspired her to take on this role, Leen shared:

“I was assigned to be a mentor, but I would have volunteered anyway. I wanted to give people the opportunity to see how work is done in the field of public health, beyond the theoretical level. I believe it is important for young professionals to experience real-world interactions with stakeholders and understand what goes on in their fields.”

Mentoring Experience

Leen has mentored various individuals across different settings before joining EMPHNET. One notable experience involved working in the Zaatari camp, where she mentored interns in

data collection and field activities. In another instance, she worked with interns from local communities in remote villages, who identified vulnerable populations in remote villages so that the mobile clinic, which she managed while working with the International Rescue Committee (IRC), could provide services effectively. Her first mentee with EMPHNET was Dr. Minahil Buksh from Pakistan, who brought a different dynamic to the mentorship.

“Minahil had a public health degree and a higher level of education compared to previous interns. She provided significant support on projects and brought her own expertise to the table. Her contributions to a research project on immunization in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, were invaluable,” Leen noted.

Preparation and Approach

Leen candidly acknowledged that being selected as a mentor was an unexpected privilege. Despite this, Dr. Minahil’s skills and personality shone through during their interactions and work.

Customized Mentoring

Leen emphasized the importance of autonomy for her mentee. She provided guidance but allowed Dr. Minahil the freedom to take ownership of her tasks.

“I gave her more autonomy and focused on providing detailed feedback on the final products,” Leen explained.

Challenges

One challenge Leen faced was the timing of the internship where Dr. Minahil joined towards the end of the project period, which impacted the types of tasks she could undertake. She also mentioned that the time zones between Jordan and Pakistan were sometimes an issue and that

Dr. Minahil also had competing priorities like her studies. Despite these challenges, the quality of Dr. Minahil’s work was not affected.

Mutual Benefits and Growth

Leen highlighted the mutual benefits of the mentoring relationship. She provided Dr. Minahil with valuable field experience while also learning about leadership and responsibility.

“For me, it was about ensuring that Minahil gained experience and learned from her time with us. It was a new leadership role within EMPHNET, and I had to make sure she knew what she was doing and was learning effectively,” Leen reflected.

Personal Growth and Advice

Reflecting on her experience, Leen advised future mentors to have clear communication and a strong understanding of their own work.

“Internal communication within EMPHNET is crucial to know more about projects and activities. Outside of EMPHNET, you need

to have expertise in your field to effectively teach someone else,” Leen suggested.

Future Plans and Recommendations

Leen expressed her willingness to mentor again, depending on the time and nature of the projects. She also recommended that the ENGAGE program improve the mentorship application process, allowing mentors to specify their availability and expertise more clearly.

By sharing her practical field experience and fostering a supportive and autonomous environment, Leen successfully navigated the challenges of mentorship, ensuring both personal and professional growth for her mentee.

The mentors’ stories reveal that successful mentorship centers on adaptability, clear communication, and mutual growth. Their insights offer valuable guidance for future mentors, supporting the Engage program’s goal of fostering professional development and project success.



Testimonials of Former Interns



“My internship at EMPHNET’s Workforce Development department has been an invaluable experience. The program provided a comprehensive learning environment that equipped me with practical skills and a deeper understanding of public health practices. I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to have been a part of the EMPHNET team and look forward to utilizing the knowledge and skills I gained to contribute meaningfully to the field of public health.”

- Workforce Capacity Intern,
Mudassir Abro



Testimonials

More from Former Interns

Hear directly from the heart of ENGAGE- our Former Interns!



“One of the most rewarding aspects of my internship was the opportunity to collaborate closely with local health authorities, healthcare workers, and community leaders. Together, we implemented targeted vaccination campaigns, conducted outreach activities, and delivered health education sessions to raise awareness about the importance of immunization.

As I reflect on my time with EMPHNET in Somalia, I am filled with gratitude for the invaluable lessons learned, the friendships forged, and the lives touched. My internship experience has not only deepened my passion for public health but has also equipped me with the skills, knowledge, and compassion to contribute meaningfully to change the zero-dose immunization in Somalia especially in the newly accessible areas of Hirshabelle state, Somalia”

*- Polio and Routine Immunization Intern,
Ahmed Mohamud Hussein*



“Before embarking on the internship, I found myself uncertain about the various career options and paths available to me. However, my time in the internship program with the Research and Policy team proved to be transformative. It sparked a newfound passion for research, reshaping my diverse interests into a systematic and scientifically grounded comprehension of not only health but also the effective approaches to apply this knowledge in building healthier communities.

I seriously cannot express my gratitude without the genuine appreciation of the experience my supervisor, Dr. Randa, offered me. It was a pleasant journey that I will most definitely not forget.”

*- Research and Policy Intern,
Mohamad Alzoubi*





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“EMPHNET stands out because it puts a lot of effort into supporting the professional growth of its interns and fosters an environment of continuous learning. Whether it was through attending biweekly intern meetings, attending webinars, or recommended reading and courses, I was always encouraged to explore my interests and expand my knowledge and skill set.

As I say goodbye to EMPHNET, I leave with a deep sense of gratitude for the opportunities it has given me and the impact it has had on my personal and professional growth. The lessons I have learned, the networking I have made, and the memories will forever have a special place in my heart.”

*- Partnership and Resource Mobilization Intern,
Reem Al-Jawlahi*

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“Engaging myself in the heart of immunization activities and initiatives currently being adopted in Somalia, I delved into the complex reality of immunization and epidemic management among under five-year-old children in Somalia. This opportunity not only broadened my theoretical knowledge but also equipped me with invaluable hands-on experience that transcends the confines of a conventional internship.

Working alongside my mentor, I witnessed firsthand the ever-evolving landscape of immunization strategies and epidemic response mechanisms. From monitoring vaccine coverage rates to conducting epidemiological analyses, every task illuminated the critical importance of proactive intervention in safeguarding vulnerable populations.”

*- Polio and Routine Immunization Intern,
Abdirahman Moallim Ibrahim*

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“During my internship, I participated in a variety of tasks, including stakeholder analysis and mapping for the One Health Unit, drafting reports and webinar outlines, and data collection. These experiences deepened my understanding of public health initiatives while honing my technical skills in data analysis and report writing. Additionally, attending technical meetings focused on environmental surveillance for Burkholderia pseudomallei in Bangladesh provided unique insights. Witnessing the project’s progress firsthand, understanding sample collection procedures, and learning the rationale behind choosing specific sampling sites were invaluable learning opportunities.”

- One Health Intern,
Aysheh Salih

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“This internship significantly contributed to my personal and professional development. I honed my abilities in Authoring Tools: Using e-learning authoring tools such as RISE 360 and gained confidence in feedback Incorporation: Incorporating feedback from stakeholders and beta testers to refine and improve the e-learning content. It also helped me clarify my career goals and inspired me to pursue a path in educational technology and learning management system.”

- Electronic Learning and Training Intern,
Sara Joudeh

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GHD|EMPHNET: Working Together for Better Health

The Eastern Mediterranean Public Health Network (EMPHNET) is a regional network that focuses on strengthening public health systems in the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR) and beyond. EMPHNET works in partnership with ministries of health, non-government organizations, international agencies, private sector, and relevant institutions from the region and the globe to promote public health and applied epidemiology. To advance the work of EMPHNET, Global Health Development (GHD) was initiated to build coordination mechanisms with partners and collaborators. Together, GHD|EMPHNET is dedicated to serving the region by supporting efforts to promote public health policies, strategic planning, sustainable financing, resource mobilization, public health programs, and other related areas.

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