



FIELD EPIDEMIOLOGY TRAINING PROGRAM

DECEMBER 1, 2022 - FEBRUARY 28, 2023 - NEWSLETTER - ISSUE 14



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Editor's Letter

We are delighted to share with you the fourteenth issue of EMPHNET's Quarterly Field Epidemiology Training Program (FETP) Newsletter. This issue covers FETP news and events in the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR) from December 1, 2022, to February 28, 2023.

The news covered in this issue highlights the achievements, hard work, and commitment of the region's FETP residents and graduates, in addition to their valuable contributions to public health in their respective countries.

This newsletter also features the graduations celebrated, the cohorts launched, in addition to the success stories shared from different country programs.

We hope you find an insightful reading experience in the pages that follow, and that they serve as a source of inspiration for you all.

FETP Newsletter Editorial Team



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Feature Story: FETP Exchange Program in the EMR

The FETP Exchange Program Contributes to the Sharing of Knowledge and Experiences in the EMR

Countries in the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR) face different challenges when striving to improve their health systems. These challenges can be the result of the socio-political unrest seen in the region, and the varying levels of economic growth, amongst other factors that greatly affect the populations' health status in these countries.

Since its establishment, EMPHNET has collaborated with ministries of health in the EMR to strengthen public health by focusing on building workforce capacities in several priority public health areas, and especially, in Field Epidemiology.

To achieve this goal, EMPHNET supports the Field Epidemiology Training Programs (FETPs) in 13 Eastern Mediterranean countries and beyond. These programs provide public health security services through a mentored learning-by-doing approach, and they ensure public health professionals are equipped with basic epidemiological competencies. EMPHNET also launches initiatives that offer spaces for FETP residents, graduates, and public health professionals to exchange experiences and



know-how. One such initiative is the recently launched FETP Exchange Program.

With its emphasis being on fieldwork, the FETP Exchange Program aims to develop the skills and competencies required by field epidemiologists to enhance surveillance systems and respond to public health threats effectively within their respective countries. Given the diverse nature of public health emergencies, outbreak investigations, and challenges experienced within EMR countries, exposing the region's public health workforce, to a wide range of experiences and fieldwork is essential.

Overview of the FETP Exchange Program

The FETP Exchange Program was launched with the aim of promoting the exchange of diverse field experiences between field epidemiologists across the EMR. Thus, the program enables countries to host FETP residents and graduates from other countries who are enrolled in any of the three tiers (Basic, Intermediate, Advanced) for a specific period of time. It is a practical working and learning experience as it allows residents to build their capacities and handle public health threats, not usually encountered in their home countries.

The program further aims to extend the regional network of public health specialists and field epidemiologists, strengthen the regional emergency response mechanism, and enhance coordination between the Ministries of Health (MoH) in the region.

Candidates are selected to join the exchange program based on a recommendation from their FETP director and the hosting country's relevant opportunities for the candidate's experience and scope of work.

Experiences From the Exchange Program

Two residents from the Afghanistan FETP recently participated in the exchange program, which required them to complete field work with the Pakistan FELTP. During their stay, they visited the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Islamabad, they attended epidemiological surveillance meetings, and they worked with contact tracing, data analysis, vaccination, and laboratory teams.

The residents also assisted in the outbreak investigation of the Dengue Fever cases, which they found to be a valuable yet challenging experience. “The experience of investigating the Dengue Fever outbreak was very interesting, as it helped me collect and analyze new and different data,” said FETP resident, Dr. Shoaib Tamim.

The exchange residents also expressed their gratitude towards the NIH and Pakistan FELTP for their support and guidance during the Dengue Fever outbreak investigation. They stated that they gained valuable technical knowledge and personal skills, such as becoming more responsible, confident, and solution oriented. The residents confirmed that they received timely and reliable information from these organizations, which enabled them to make informed decisions and take effective action during the outbreak investigation.

Another milestone in this program’s implementation was the experience shared between Lebanon FETP and Tunisia FETP. Lebanon FETP Director, Dr. Nada Ghoson; and the Lebanon FETP Coordinator, Dr. Zeina Farah travelled to Tunisia. This exchange allowed for a valuable space for collaboration and knowledge-sharing between the two programs, and it offered the Lebanon FETP team a hands-on learning experience to further develop their skills and expertise.

“The objective of our visit was to see how other countries are implementing their FETP activities,



and we had fruitful discussions on the similarities and differences in the implementation of the program in the two countries,” said Dr. Zeina.

Dr. Zeina also encourages other residents and graduates to join the FETP Exchange Program, as she believes that the program can enhance their skills and offer them the opportunity to meet with other FETP residents and graduates to share experiences.

Furthermore, the program also facilitated the exchange of knowledge and experience between FETPs in Yemen and Iraq. Dr. Yasir Ghaleb from Yemen FETP visited the Iraq FETP to learn about their activities and gain access to training materials relevant to the Intermediate program, which he deemed a valuable learning experience that contributed to strengthening Yemen FETP.

Overall, this program is projected to contribute to increasing the number of trained epidemiologists in the region who are equipped to carry out surveillance and field investigations and have the skills needed to control disease outbreaks effectively. This will also contribute to the development of a skilled workforce that can tackle public health challenges more effectively.

Feature Story: Dr. Mohammad Abu Khudair Visits Yemen FETP

In January 2023, EMPHNET's Medical Epidemiologist and Jordan FETP graduate, Dr. Mohammad Abu Khudair, undertook a three-week visit to Yemen on behalf of EMPHNET. The purpose of the visit was to monitor the progress of the Yemen Field Epidemiology Training Program (Yemen FETP) and their initiatives, as well as to provide support and engage with EMPHNET's country office in Yemen. Dr. Abu Khudair's agenda included meetings with stakeholders from the Ministry of Health and Population (MoPH), as well as partners from UN agencies and national and international NGOs.

During his trip to Yemen, Dr. Abu Khudair had the opportunity to meet with various stakeholders, including the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP) for Primary Healthcare Dr. Ali AL Walidi, and the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Health and Population Dr. Mohammed Al-Mansour, as well as directors from several health departments within the MoHP. These meetings focused on discussing a range of new initiatives and projects that will be jointly launched by EMPHNET and the stakeholders. He also had the opportunity to engage with representatives from various international organizations and local NGOs. He held meetings with representatives from UNICEF, WHO-Yemen Office in Sana'a, and WHO sub-office in Aden, among others, to discuss potential collaborations and partnerships with EMPHNET.

During his visit to Yemen FETP, he learned that they are now focused on two major projects. The first project aims to combat and eliminate River Blindness disease, which is supported by all health departments involved in the project, including those in Sana'a and Aden. The second project involves PVV (Polio Village Volunteers), where health care professionals and civilians volunteer to spread awareness and collect data in villages to eradicate polio.



Through his several meetings with health directors from the ministry of health and Yemen FETP directors Dr. Abu Khudair was impressed by the unique nature of the program and the significant achievements they had made. For instance, in 2022, Yemen FETP residents produced over 200 data analysis reports and case studies using the MoHP surveillance systems. They also evaluated 25 surveillance programs and are currently working on enhancing the skills and capabilities of surveillance coordinators in district directories through the Public Health Empowerment Program (PHEP), with the support of EMPHNET. Dr. Abu Khudair also reviewed their programs, analysis reports, outbreak investigations, and presentations with them.

Additionally, the Yemen FETP won the CDC Atlanta award for disease control management, they also participated in the 11th TEPHINET conference and won best poster and participated in two workshops in the conference along with EMPHNET. They also participated in the Middle Eastern Association for Cancer Research Conference from both Sana'a and Aden, in addition to publishing 12 scientific papers in scientific journals in the past year.

According to Dr. Abu Khudair this program deserves extra attention because of the geographical nature and the unease of access between governorates. Thus, it's important to have technical coordinators in each governorate, to be able to work on outbreak investigations and disease control methods more easily.

When asked about what sets Yemen FETP apart from other programs, he noted that despite facing various challenges and obstacles, and coming from different governorates, and even with the difficult economic circumstances, they complete their tasks. Furthermore, Yemen's FETP geography and its endemic diseases are unique, and thus they offer residents and graduates a unique learning experience. He also stressed on the residents' high level

of cooperation and hard work, expressing gratitude towards EMPHNET for providing the necessary support and graduating over 150 residents since the program's launch.

Furthermore, Dr. Abu Khudair stated that the program is crucial for the region, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. The training and expertise of FETP residents and graduates proved instrumental in responding to the pandemic, thus countries without FETP faced greater difficulties.

To conclude, he expressed appreciation towards Jordan FETP, EMPHNET, and all individuals working on FETPs in general, attributing the success of the program in the region to the efforts of FETP residents and graduates.





**Country
Program News**

This section highlights the region's FETPs' updates

AFGHANISTAN

Afghanistan FETP Fourth Intermediate Cohort Completes EpiInfo Workshop

As part of their one-year training, Afghanistan Field Epidemiology Training Program (Afghanistan FETP) fourth intermediate cohort residents finished a one-week workshop that focused on data management and analysis using EpiInfo.

During the workshop, residents created an analysis plan for the data they have collected in order to formulate conclusions and generate reports.



Afghanistan FETP Residents Participate in an Outbreak Investigation

Afghanistan FETP residents from the south region participated in an outbreak investigation of suspected Pertussis in the Fatuzai village of the Shahjoy district, in Zabol province on December 21, 2022, after two deaths were recorded.

The residents supported the investigation team by offering physical examinations of the suspected cases, as well as control and prevention approaches, recommendations, and community awareness sessions.



Afghanistan FETP Third Intermediate Cohort Conducts a KAP Survey on Cholera

In 2022, some regions in Afghanistan experienced heavy floods that eventually paved the way for water source contamination and potential emergence of cholera outbreaks.

Accordingly, residents of the Afghanistan FETP third intermediate cohort conducted a Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice (KAP) survey on the local community regarding Cholera. This was conducted in four Cholera-high risk districts within the Kandahar province.



BANGLADESH

Participants from Bangladesh DLS Join FETPV Screening Course

In February, 2023, 13 Participants from the Department of Livestock Services (DLS) Bangladesh joined the screening course for the selection of the second cohort for the Bangladesh Field Epidemiology Training Program for Veterinarians (Bangladesh FETPV).

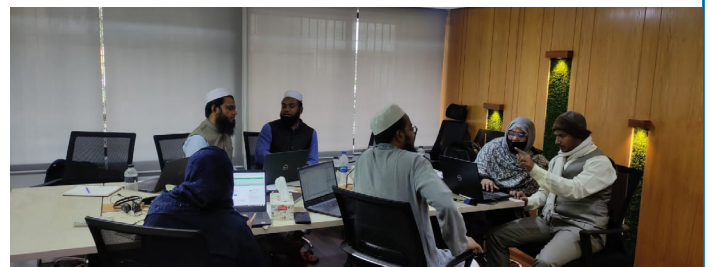
In this course, the participants received training in basic epidemiology and were required to complete some assignments in order to qualify for the next FETPV cohort. The course was led by a panel of experts in animal and public health, university faculty members, and participants from the first cohort of the FETPV who served as guides.



Bangladesh FETPV Hosts a Data Analysis Workshop

In February 2023, the Bangladesh FETPV hosted a three-day data analysis workshop.

The workshop was organized by the DLS and EMPHNET, with instructions provided by statistician Dr. Kanis Fatama Ferdousi, and EMPHNET's team members.



Different Departments in Bangladesh Collaborate to Advance the One-Health Approach

The Microbiology Department of Sher-e-Bangla Medical College and the Animal Diagnosis Laboratory in Barisal have teamed up to advance the One-Health Approach at the local level. The Microbiology Department in the Medical College trained the Animal Diagnosis Laboratory Officials on antimicrobial sensitivity testing. Dr. Akbar Kabir, a regional AMR Surveillance Development expert, recently visited the lab for its surveillance program inauguration. Before the program's launch, Dr. Md. Ibrahim Khalil, FETPV resident, collaborated with the organizations in Bangladesh and abroad to create a questionnaire and a surveillance plan.



IEDCR Hosts a Mentor Training Workshop for Bangladesh FETPB and FETPV

The Institute of Epidemiology Disease Control And Research (IEDCR) hosted a three-day mentor training workshop in collaboration with the DLS and EMPHNET, from Jan 31 to Feb 2, 2023 for both FETPB and FETPV residents in Dhaka. The workshop was attended by 25 mentors from IEDCR, the Directorate of General Health (DGHS), and DLS. It was facilitated by members who attended the Master Mentors training held in Jordan last year. Participants gained new mentorship skills that will serve as an asset to both programs and help guide future residents during their fieldwork.



A Bangladesh FETPV Resident Completes a WOAHA training workshop on Animal Rabies Diagnosis

A resident from the Bangladesh FETPV recently completed a World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH) Sub-regional training workshop on Animal Rabies Diagnosis in India. The workshop took place between 18-21 January 2023, and focused on teaching the techniques of sending the samples from animals with rabies, and other diagnostic procedures. Lessons learned from this workshop will help improve the rabies control program in the country.



Bangladesh FETP Inaugurates its Second Intermediate Cohort

The Bangladesh FETP inaugurated its second Intermediate cohort on December 18, 2022 in a ceremonial event held at the IEDCR.

The intermediate FETP is a nine-month to one-year in-service training, that addresses the skills needed by health officials at the middle level of the Ministry of Health to improve epidemiologic capacities, evaluate and strengthen public health surveillance systems, investigate and control outbreaks, and conduct field studies to address public health priority issues. In this program, participants learn and practice the fundamental skills needed to perform efficiently in local surveillance systems.



EGYPT

Egypt FETP Holds a Mentorship Training Workshop

In January, 2023, the Egypt Field Epidemiology Training Program (Egypt FETP) concluded a Mentorship Training Workshop.

The workshop was facilitated by the National Master FETP Mentor Trainers, who were trained in Jordan last July, along with a facilitator from EMPHNET. Its sessions were designed to enable participants to cover the mentorship needs of Egypt FETP residents, and to build the capabilities of a pool of qualified mentors.



Twenty participants completed the workshop, and received the certificate of “Certified FETP Mentor”, that was awarded to them by the Assistant Minister for Preventive Medicine, Ministry of Health and Population, Egypt, Dr. Amr Kandeel.

Egypt FETP Celebrates the Graduation of its 21st Advanced Cohort

After the successful completion of two-years of in-service training covering different areas of applied epidemiology, eight epidemiologists graduated from the advanced FETP.

The graduation ceremony saw attendance from the Chief of the Preventive Sector within the Egypt Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP), Dr. Amr Kandeel; Director-General of the Epidemiology and Surveillance Department, Dr. Manal Labib; and Egypt FETP Director, Dr. Sahar Samy.

Egypt FETP also welcomed the Executive Director of EMPHNET Dr. Mohammad Al-Nsour; and the guests of honor, Dr. Adel Belbaisi, Dr. Ruba Al-Souri and Dr. Nada Ahmad from EMPHNET.

The event was concluded by expressing appreciation to the FETP staff, FETP scientific committee, cohort mentors, and FETP graduates for their support and contributions towards improving the health system in Egypt.



Egypt FETP Residents and Graduates Participate in the National Polio Vaccination Campaign

Egypt FETP residents and graduates participated in the National Polio Vaccination Campaign in Egypt. The participants included FETP residents and graduates from the Advanced and Intermediate Cohorts as well as the Public Health Empowerment Program (PHEP).

The campaign was implemented across all Egyptian governorates over the course of four days, with aims to vaccinate all children aged one day to five years living in Egypt for free.



Egypt FETP Residents and Graduates Participate in the Fourth Annual Hybrid Scientific Conference of CPHL

Egypt's Ministry of Health and Population hosted the Fourth Annual Hybrid Scientific Conference of Central Public Health Laboratories (CPHL 2022) under the theme "Towards One Health Approach" in Cairo between December 10 and 11, 2022.

Conference sessions focused on the recent technologies used in the field of laboratory analysis, and the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in medical diagnosis. The conference agenda also featured sessions highlighting recent laboratory research in the field of food and water safety, antimicrobial resistance, and biosafety and biosecurity.

On their part, Egypt FETP residents and graduates shared the results of studies conducted during their FETP training.



Egypt FETP Releases their Bi-annual Newsletter

Egypt FETP released the latest issue of its newsletter.

This issue of the newsletter covered the news of FETP residents and graduates from June to December 2022, including the Egypt FETP TEPHINET Accreditation, mentorship workshops, field work, the latest conferences they participated in, as well as their publications, in addition to news and updates on the Advanced, Intermediate, and PHEP cohorts. You can access the newsletter [Here](#).

IRAQ

Iraq FETP Third Intermediate Cohort Residents Conduct a Survey Related to Anxiety and Depression

In cooperation with the School Health Section in the Public Health Directorate, the third Iraq intermediate Field Epidemiology Training Program (Iraq FETP) residents participated in a survey of high school students in all Iraqi governorates. The survey was titled “The Influence of Anxiety and Depression on Academic Performance and Self-esteem among a sample of Iraqi high school students” for the year 2022. The sample selected for this survey included 20% of all Iraqi high schools and 10% of the students in the selected schools. Paper questionnaires were distributed to the students, which the residents later collected and entered the data electronically. The survey was conducted over a period of one week, from 26 February to 2 March.



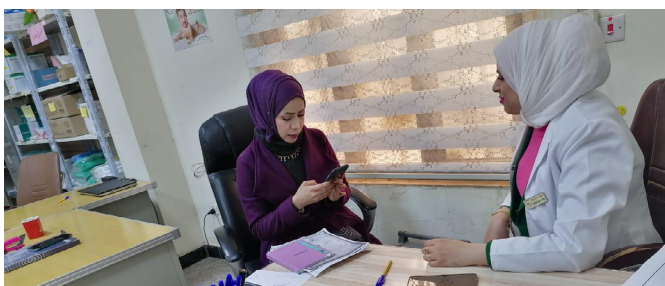
Updates from Iraq FETP Third Intermediate Cohort

As part of their training, the third Iraq FETP intermediate cohort residents were divided into several groups with 6-7 participants in each.

One group of residents conducted a Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice (KAP) study on breastfeeding among mothers working in health care in Basra as part of their training for the year 2023. They sampled 70% of the health districts in Basra province, including Primary Care Centers, and included all mothers working in health care in the PHCCs of the selected districts. The data collection period took one week, from 12-16 February.

In addition, another group from the Iraq FETP residents evaluated the Acute Flaccid Paralysis (AFP) surveillance system in Baghdad for the year 2022. The evaluation was conducted at Public Health Departments in Baghdad Al-Karkh, and Baghdad Al-Russafa, as well as the Central Public Health Lab in Baghdad. The group selected 50% of hospitals and districts in Baghdad Al-Karkh and Al-Russafa Departments of health that had AFP surveillance sites. The evaluation was conducted over a period of one week, from 5-9 February. After gathering all the necessary information, the group analyzed the data to obtain their results.

Both the KAP study, and AFP surveillance system analysis data collection were conducted using an electronic self-administered questionnaire using Kobo Toolbox designed by the residents.



Iraq FETP and Iraq BTRP Holds a Workshop on FETP Sustainability Plan

As part of the sustainability plan development for the Iraq FETP, and with the support of the Biological Threat Reduction Program (BTRP), the Iraq FETP held a five-day workshop on writing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). The workshop took place in Baghdad from January 29 to February 2 and was attended by 11 participants, all of whom were FETP graduates from the Advanced, Intermediate, and Basic tiers. Throughout the workshop, the participants worked together to complete a draft for SOPs.



This workshop was designed to help FETP graduates develop the skills they need to write effective SOPs, which will be an essential component of the Iraq FETP's sustainability plan.

Iraq FETP Holds a Workshop on Leadership and Management

At the start of the year, the Iraq FETP Third Intermediate Cohort held its first workshop on Leadership and Management with the support of the BTRP. The 11-day workshop took place in Baghdad from January 2 to 13, 2023 and was led by two international trainers. The attendance comprised 33 residents and their 9 mentors, all of whom are intermediate FETP graduates.

The workshop covered a range of topics, including the project management cycle, the difference between leadership and management, and how to overcome adaptive and technical challenges. The training also included group work on the project management cycle, the ORDI framework, short quizzes, and two exams.

Iraq FETP Holds an RRT Workshop in Response to Health Security Needs

Iraq FETP held its first training workshop to activate the Rapid Response Teams (RRT) in response to health security needs. The workshop took place in Baghdad from February 5 to 9 and was attended by ten participants from various departments within the Public Health Directorate, along with one international and two national trainers.

The workshop sessions focused on risk assessment, risk communication, and the use of epidemiological clues to respond to outbreaks. Participants also received training on the use of different types of personal protective equipment (PPE). The training included pre and post-tests, a tabletop exercise, and an evaluation of its outcomes.

These trained participants will go on to train others in various provinces across Iraq, working in cooperation with relevant multisectoral partners to respond to different types of emergencies. By providing this training, the Iraq FETP aims to strengthen the capacity of the RRTs and ensure that Iraq is prepared to address health security threats effectively.

JORDAN

Jordan FETP Residents Participate in an Outbreak Investigation in Jerash, Jordan

Jordan Field Epidemiology Training Program (Jordan FETP) residents took part in investigating a foodborne illness outbreak in Jerash, North of Jordan, which led to over 200 individuals seeking medical attention at the Jerash main hospital for symptoms such as diarrhea, vomiting, fever, and abdominal pain. Fortunately, all patients received appropriate treatment and were discharged. After conducting the investigation, led by the surveillance department of the Ministry of Health, along with the residents and their supervisors, it was determined that all cases had eaten at a particular restaurant. As a precaution, the restaurant was closed during the investigation.



Jordan FETP Participates in Updating “Surveillance Guidelines of Communicable Diseases”

Alongside other notable healthcare professionals and public health officials from the Ministry of Health, Jordan FETP was represented by three doctors who were selected to be part of the committee responsible for updating the “Surveillance Guidelines of Communicable Diseases.” The committee held its first meeting in February to work on the 2023 version of the guidelines, ensuring that they are up to date with the latest emerging and re-emerging diseases. The updated guidelines serve as a tool for implementing effective measures and procedures for reporting, informing, and documenting communicable diseases. The guidelines also provide up-to-date case definitions for the diseases reported to the Ministry.



Jordan FETP Participates in Scabies Awareness Campaign

In February 2023, the Epidemiology Administration of Jordan's Ministry of Health (MoH) organized a Scabies awareness campaign in the Ghour Alsafi area, Jordan valley, in which Jordan FETP residents and graduates participated. The objective of the campaign was to educate the residents, schools, and health providers about Scabies by providing relevant information. The campaign consisted of health education lectures and the distribution of pamphlets highlighting the clinical signs, prevention measures, and treatment options for the disease. Furthermore, the importance of surveillance was emphasized to schools and medical centers, whose staff were informed that treatment was readily available at all medical centers in the area.

Jordan FETP Participate in a Pilot Program Utilizing a Model of Instructor-led E-case Studies

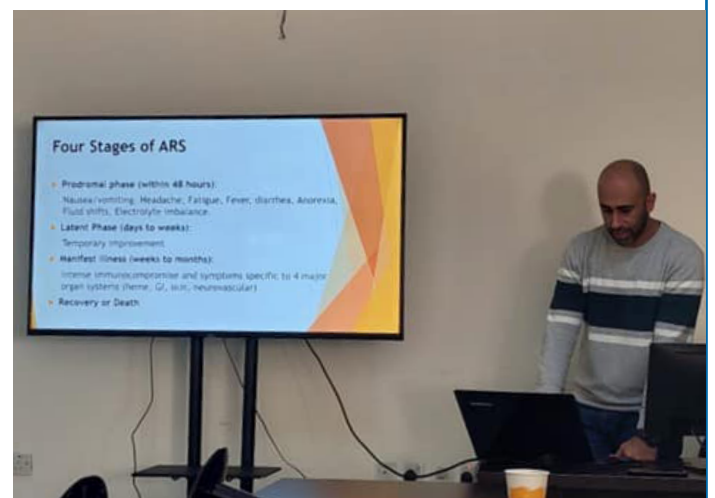
Graduates and residents of Jordan FETP participated in a soon to be launched pilot program utilizing a model of instructor-led e-case studies, created by EMPHNET. The purpose of their participation was to test its effectiveness in real-world scenarios. The pilot was conducted over the course of five days, and was a virtual activity that featured a case study titled "Investigation and Control of a Measles outbreak in Puli-Khumri and Baghlan-Markazi districts, Baghlan province, Afghanistan."



During the session, participants engaged in interactive readings through self-paced sessions and group exercises and provided evaluations and feedback to inform future iterations of the model.

Jordan FETP Holds Weekly Meetings at the Jordanian MoH

Every Thursday, Jordan FETP residents and graduates gather in the Jordanian MoH to participate in the "Weekly Scientific Day." The main objective of this day is to facilitate continuous improvement and offer a space for discussion and feedback on the participants' work. This is achieved by giving weekly reports from their respective departments, from either the epidemiology administration or the primary health care directorate. Participants are also given the opportunity to present and lecture on epidemiology, biostatistics, environmental and occupational health, amongst other topics.



LEBANON

Lebanon FETP Commences its PHEP-SPO Mentor Training Workshop

The Lebanon Field Epidemiology Training Program (Lebanon FETP) commenced its Public Health Empowerment Program – Surveillance Polio Officer (PHEP-SPO) Mentor Training workshop on January 31, 2023.

This three-day workshop was designed to help mentors comprehend the PHEP-SPO structure and design, and become familiar with the Learning Management System (LMS) among other tools and systems related to the program.



ANNOUNCEMENT



ENGAGE Newsletter Issue #5 Published

We are happy to share with you the fifth issue of EMPHNET's "ENGAGE" internship newsletter.

In this issue, we feature ENGAGE interns who were with us from July to December 2022, and we welcome new interns for the current cycle. We also share success stories of interns who became employees. The issue further covers new mentors' experiences, and testimonials from former interns.

Read It [here](#)

MOROCCO

Morocco FETP Residents and Graduates Participate in an EOC Hemorrhagic Fever Workshop

The Morocco Field Epidemiology Training Program (Morocco FETP) residents and graduates participated in the second workshop on the development of thematic plans for preparedness and response to viral hemorrhagic fever organized by the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). This workshop took place between February 21-22, 2023, its purpose was to compose the initial plans for the preparedness and response to viral hemorrhagic fever such as Ebola, Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever, Lassa fever, and Dengue.

The plan was discussed and reviewed with the aim of presenting it to the scientific committee and surveillance teams for validation.



Morocco FETP Celebrates the Graduation of its Intermediate Cohort

Morocco FETP celebrated the graduation of its first Intermediate cohort that comprised 14 residents, all of whom completed their one-year training.

The graduation was attended by Morocco FETP Director Dr. Hassn Chrifi; Members of the Moroccan Ministry of Health (MoH); and the Eastern Mediterranean Public Health Network’s (EMPHNET) Executive Director, Dr. Mohannad Al Nsour, who congratulated the graduates and awarded them their certificates.

The ceremony was held at the National School of Public Health in Rabat, in January 2023.



ANET Holds its Second Scientific Congress in Rabat, Morocco

The National Society of Field Epidemiology (ANET) Morocco held its second scientific congress under the theme “Field Epidemiology as the Pillar of Health Security in Light of Epidemiological Risks.” on January 27 and 28, 2023 in Rabat, Morocco.

This congress was supported by the Moroccan MoH, the World Health Organization (WHO), EMPHNET, Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), and the Spanish organization “Medicos Mendi.”

Through its sessions, national and international experts, as well as researchers from countries such as Jordan, Pakistan, Spain, France, Mauritania, Chad, and South Sudan had the opportunity to present their scientific work related to the congress’ theme. It also offered them a space to exchange knowledge and experiences with colleagues from different disciplines, including public health, virology, medicine, pharmacy, and others.

Furthermore, the congress featured the participation of international experts as well as experts and researchers from countries such as Jordan, Pakistan, Spain, France, Mauritania, Chad, and South Sudan.

More than 60 field research abstracts were presented, along with scientific seminars and roundtable discussions on health security and the vital role of epidemiologists and experts in this field.



OMAN

Oman FETP Celebrates the Graduation of its First PHEP Cohort

The Oman Field Epidemiology Training Program (Oman FETP) celebrated the graduation of its first Public Health Empowerment Program (PHEP) cohort. The cohort comprises 22 graduates, all of whom had successfully completed their three-month training.

Prior to their graduation, PHEP residents completed the third and final workshop of their three-month in-service training, in December, 2022.

The workshop focused on management and leadership. During its sessions the Oman FETP residents presented their work to their peers and mentors.



PAKISTAN

Pakistan FELTP Attend a Workshop on JEE

In collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) and other partner organizations, the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination and the National Institutes of Health in Islamabad organized a four-day national workshop on “National Self Evaluation on Joint External Evaluation (JEE) Tool” from February 6 to 9, 2023.



The event saw attendance from Pakistan Field Epidemiology and Laboratory Training Program (FELTP Pakistan) residents and graduates from across the country. The workshop covered all 19 core capacities of the JEE tool and reviewed Pakistan’s capacities in these areas. The FELTP Pakistan residents and graduates gave detailed presentations on each core capacity, which were well-received by the master facilitators from the WHO-EMRO regional office. The workshop’s report will be useful for the joint external evaluation of Pakistan, scheduled for 2023.

Pakistan FELTP Participate in a Workshop on Preparedness and Response

In collaboration with the European Union Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Risk Mitigation (EU CBRN) Center of Excellence, Pakistan FELTP participated in a two-day training workshop on preparedness and response for mass gatherings and other health threats that was held on January 30 and 31, 2023. The workshop covered four main components, including food safety, water safety, chemical incidents, and command, control, and risk communication (C3) for mass gathering preparedness. The training was facilitated by FELTP graduates, while residents participated in the event. A field exercise was also organized as part of the training, which simulated a mass gathering event. The purpose of the workshop and the field exercise was to improve the public health preparedness of various sectors and their roles in managing public health emergencies. The training and simulation exercise were successful and received positive feedback from the EU CBRN Center of Excellence. More information about the event can be found [here](#).



Pakistan FELTP Holds a Training for Female Health Workers in Peshawar

A three-day training was held for Female Health Workers (FHW) in the district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan in partnership with EMPHNET’s Pakistan country office. The project was led by EMPHNET’s Country Manager; Dr. Zakir Hussain, as well as two Pakistan FELTP graduates who were responsible for facilitating the training. The goal of the training was to better equip FHWs to carry out work on routine EPI and COVID-19 vaccines, which will in turn improve the overall vaccine uptake and strengthen the healthcare system in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.



Pakistan FELTP Attends a Training Session Conducted by the CDC, NIH, USAID, and UKHSA

The CDC, NIH, USAID, and UKHSA recently conducted a training session for healthcare professionals in Pakistan in January 2023, in which 76 healthcare professionals in Sindh, 63 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and 65 in Azad Jammu and Kashmir were trained in areas such as disease surveillance, outbreak detection, epidemiological investigation, disease data collection, public health response measures, community awareness, risk communication, and reporting through the DHIS-2 tool. This training will improve the ability of these districts to effectively detect and respond to disease outbreaks through the IDSR system.



ANNOUNCEMENT



Mark your Calendars for EMPHNET’s Eighth Regional Conference in October 2022

We are pleased to announce that the Eighth EMPHNET Regional Conference will be held between October 22 and 25, 2023, in Amman, Jordan. With the central theme of the conference being “Advancing Public Health Preparedness and Response: Challenges, Opportunities, and Ways Forward”.

Keep an eye on our social media channels for the abstract submission announcement. [Read More](#)

SUDAN

Sudan FETP Commences a Mentorship Workshop

From February 4 to 6, 2023, The Sudan Field Epidemiology Training Program (Sudan FETP) and EMPHNET jointly hosted a mentorship training program for 30 mentors from the Ministries of Health, UNICEF, and WHO. This training aimed to expand the pool of mentors available to support future cohorts of the Sudan FETP.



The training sessions focused on the role of mentors, the necessary skills and competencies needed to perform their mentorship responsibilities, and how to provide effective guidance to FETP residents. The newly trained mentors will be instrumental in supporting the Sudan FETP program's future cohorts.

Sudan FETP Third Intermediate Cohort Conducts its Third Workshop

Sudan FETP successfully conducted the third workshop for its third Intermediate cohort, in Khartoum state between January 22 and 26, 2023.

This five-day event commenced with a welcoming speech by Sudan FETP Director and Director General of Health Emergencies and Epidemic Control Dr. Muntasir Osman.

During the workshop, residents from different states (Khartoum, Aljazira, Northern and River Nile states) had the opportunity to present their field work activities, surveillance system evaluation, surveillance system analysis, and outbreak investigation presentations.

Assessment of the residents' field work and feedback was provided by Senior Epidemiologists Dr. Hassan El-Bushra and Dr. Babiker El Magbul.

The last day of the workshop was dedicated to group projects, where the residents conceptualized and presented their research title, objective, problem statement, and justification and methodology.

Following the workshop, residents returned to their places of work to start their field work.

Sudan FETP Second Intermediate Cohort Commences its Fourth Workshop

The Sudan FETP second Intermediate cohort commenced the fourth workshop within its curriculum. The objectives of this workshop include giving the residents the opportunity to present their group work progress and present the activities they carried out in the field with a focus on outbreak investigations. The workshop is also set to review the topics they learned in the fourth online module.



Sudan FETP Graduates its Second Advanced Cohort

A ceremony was held on January 5, 2023, under the patronage of the Sudan Minister of Health H.E. Dr. Haitham Awadallah to celebrate the graduation of the Sudan FETP Second Advanced Cohort.

In his remarks, Sudan FETP Director and the Director General of Health Emergency and Response, Dr. Muntasir. M Osman highlighted the importance of this milestone and urged partners to continue to support for the sustainability and expansion of the program.

EMPHNET Workforce Capacity Team Leader Dr. Haitham Bashier also gave remarks during the ceremony, during which he highlighted EMPHNET's role as a supporter for FETP sustainability In the Eastern Mediterranean Region.

From his end, Sudan FETP Technical Advisor, Dr. M.Nageeb gave a presentation highlighting the Sudan FETP experience in supporting outbreak investigations, surveillance system evaluations and analysis at national and subnational levels.

The cohort comprised eight graduates all of whom are deployed at the national and subnational levels at West Darfur state, Gadarif State, Blue Nile State and Red Sea State.



Sudan FETP Residents Make Field Visits to Flood Affected Areas

Sudan FETP Advanced and Intermediate cohorts' residents reached post rainfalls affected people at Aroma Locality, Kassala State, during a Community Health Needs Survey held on December 4, 2022

In addition, Sudan FETP residents conducted a community assessment for public health emergency response in areas affected by rainfalls at the Al Rahad Locality, Al Gadarif State in Sudan.



TUNISIA

Tunisia FETP Hosts a Master Mentors Training Workshop

The Tunisia Field Epidemiology Training Program (Tunisia FETP) hosted a Master Mentors workshop on February 22, 2023. The workshop was attended by 17 FETP residents and graduates and was facilitated by four subject matter experts.



Tunisia FETP Celebrates the Graduation of the Second PHEP Cohort and the Third and Fourth Intermediate Cohorts

On December 23, 2022, the Tunisia FETP held a ceremonial event commemorating the graduation of the Second Cohort of the Public Health Empowerment Program (PHEP) and the third and fourth cohorts of the Intermediate FETP.



Tunisia FETP Residents Present Their Projects in a Workshop

Tunisia FETP presented their projects before their colleagues in December, 2022, in an activity that forms part of the fifth workshop in their one-year training. This cohort comprises 14 residents and ten mentors.



YEMEN

Yemen FETP Commences its Sixth Advanced Cohort

The Yemen Field Epidemiology Training Program (Yemen FETP) commenced its sixth Advanced Cohort on December 3, 2022, with a one-week training. The training sessions focused on biosafety, biosecurity, and infection control. It was led by a national health expert in Yemen with assistance from the Yemen FETP staff. The launch saw attendance by His Excellency the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Health and Population Dr. Mohammed Al-Mansour, and the Director General for Disease Control and Surveillance Dr. Al Moayed.



In January 10, 2023, the sixth advanced cohort of the Yemen FETP completed their Surveillance System Evaluation Reports, which is a pivotal deliverable in their two-year curriculum. From there they will go on to present their findings in the fourth mentorship meeting.

Moreover, the same cohort residents took a one-week course on strategic planning, in February, 2023. The course featured lectures on leadership, management, communication skills, problem-solving, and supervision techniques, and was attended by ten residents and eight participants from the Ministry of Health (MoH) programs.

Updates on Yemen FETP First Intermediate Cohort

The Yemen FETP commenced the third workshop for its first Intermediate cohort in December, 2022. In this workshop, 24 residents presented their planned studies which focused on communicable diseases and NCDs.

Additionally, The Leadership, Management and Strategic Planning workshop for the Yemen FETP first Intermediate cohort commenced in Sana'a on the same month. Participating residents were required to develop strategic plans for their programs or departments in their governorates. This was done based on the instructions they received as part of their training.



Yemen FETP Third PHEP Cohort Completes their Third Workshop

On December 21, 2022, the Yemen FETP third cohort of the Public Health Empowerment Program (PHEP) in Aden, completed the third workshop forming part of their three-month training.

The workshop was attended by surveillance coordinators from 24 directorates, while the closing ceremony was attended by the Undersecretary of Yemen Ministry of Public Health and Population (MoPHP) for Primary Healthcare Dr. Ali Al Walidi alongside representatives from the WHO.



Yemen FETP and EPI Conducts the Conclusion Workshop for PHEP Supervisors

On December 7, 2022, Yemen FETP and the Expanded Program for Immunization (EPI) conducted the conclusion workshop of the PHEP for immunization supervisors. The workshop targeted 23 supervisors from the central and governorate levels.

The workshop saw attendance from his Excellency the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Health and Population Dr. Mohammed Al-Mansour; the National Coordinator of the Immunization Program Dr. Ghada Al Haboob, and Dr. Labiba Anam on behalf of Dr. Abdelhakim Al Kohlani the Yemen FETP director.



Call for Abstracts!

EMPHNET is accepting abstracts for its Eighth Regional Conference

Abstracts can be submitted between March 15 and July 15, 2023
(11:59 pm, Amman Time)

Other News

This section covers regional news and success stories



OTHER NEWS

EMPHNET Holds its Twenty-Eighth Webinar Titled “Investing in Public Health Workforce Capacity in the Eastern Mediterranean Region: Progress, Lessons, and Prospects.”

EMPHNET held a webinar titled “Investing in Public Health Workforce Capacity in the Eastern Mediterranean Region: Progress, Lessons, and Prospects” on Tuesday, February 21, 2023. The session offered a space to reflect on the educational needs of health systems, as well as regulatory, and professional aspects pertinent to the topic.

The session was led by three subject matter experts namely: the President of the UK Faculty of Public Health (FPH), Professor John Middleton, the Executive Director of the International Academy of Public Health (IAPH), Dr. Haitham Bashier, and the Chairperson Community Medicine Council of the Arab Board of Health Associations, Dr. Elsheikh Badr. The session was moderated by Public Health Expert, and Professor at Baghdad University, Iraq, Dr. Faris Lami.

One of the presentations, given by Dr. Haitham Bashier, focused specifically on the role of FETPs in public health and their contribution to strengthening workforce capacity, in addition to their achievements, particularly in the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR). He described FETPs as a supervised, on-the-job, competency-based training and service programs designed to develop field epidemiologists and public health system surveillance officers. These programs are tailored to suit the needs and conditions of individual countries and regions and were initiated with financial and technical support from external donors and partners.

Dr. Bashier also stressed on the importance of networking for FETPs to coordinate efforts and ensure their continuity and sustainability. Networking platforms such as regional conferences, workshops, guidelines, and technical documents, have been crucial in supporting FETPs.



In numbers, up to 2022, there were 91 FETPs in 165 countries and territories, with more than 21,000 graduates. In Africa and the EMR, more than 2,000 and 1,000+ graduates, respectively, have completed the FETP-Frontline program. FETPs have evaluated, developed, or implemented more than 8,680 disease surveillance systems and investigated more than 14,190 outbreaks or acute health events. FETP graduates have delivered more than 11,250 oral and poster presentations at scientific conferences and published more than 3,710 peer-reviewed articles.

Additionally, Dr. Bashier presented the impact FETPs had in recent years, such as in many countries achieving complete or near-complete district-level coverage with at least one FETP-Frontline-trained surveillance officer. For example, the Frontline FETP in Sudan has increased reporting from 0% to 96% and the completeness of reports to 100%. FETPs have also contributed to the global COVID-19 response, with 65 FETPs around the world.

He concluded his presentation by stating that FETPs have contributed to various areas, including epidemiology and surveillance, risk communication, monitoring and assessment activities, managing logistics and operations, training and capacity building, and developing guidelines and protocols.

[Read More](#)
[Watch Webinar](#)

EMPHNET Conducts a Virtual Side Event in the CPIHA Conference in Africa

EMPHNET conducted a side event titled “Blended FETP: An Innovative Approach for Professional Training” in the Second International Conference on Public Health in Africa (CPIHA) Kigali, Rwanda. The side event was held by EMPHNET’s Team virtually on December 18, 2022, and was attended by 20 participants from different countries, who were engaged in interactive sessions and group exercises.

The event was designed to introduce the Field Epidemiology Training Program (FETP) blended model which was developed for the Frontline (PHEP) and Intermediate FETPs.

Bangladesh FETPV Resident Joins FAO - ECTAD

For the very first time in Bangladesh, Field Epidemiology Training Program for Veterinarians (Bangladesh FETPV) Fellow, and EMPHNET FETPV Ambassador, Dr. Ibrahim Khalil has been selected by Food and Agriculture Organization – Emergency Center for Transboundary Animal Diseases (FAO - ECTAD) to be a member of the group aimed to developing Standard Treatment Guidelines (STGs) for large animals.



Bangladesh FETP Graduate Joins the One Health Secretariat

Dr. Jobaida Khanam, a member of the Bangladesh FETPV first cohort, recently joined the One Health Secretariat.

Between January 9 to 15, 2023, she participated in a surveillance program on the ecology of Nipah virus in bats in Bangladesh, which was conducted by the Eco-Health Alliance in partnership with the Institute of Epidemiology Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) and the Bangladesh Forest Department. In her role as a representative of the One Health Secretariat, she gained knowledge about capturing bats, taking samples from bats, and wildlife surveillance.



[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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