



GHD|EMPHNET



Global Health
Development

► GHD | EMPHNET: working
together for better health



EMPHNET
The Eastern Mediterranean
Public Health Network

OUR ESTABLISHMENT

Our journey started in Kuala Lumpur in 2008, when a bilateral meeting was held during the Training Programs in Epidemiology and Public Health Interventions Network (TEPHINET) Global Conference. In this meeting, the Directors of Field Epidemiology Training Programs (FETPs) from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Jordan, met with representatives from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to discuss the need to establish a network that would facilitate and coordinate FETP activities in the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR). Several discussions followed to develop this initial concept further, until a follow-up meeting took place in Amman, Jordan later that year. In this meeting, directors of the three FETPs met along with representatives from the CDC and NAMRU3- and agreed on establishing a regional network with a consensus of having its headquarters office in Amman.



WHY WE EXIST

The Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR) embraces countries that vary in economic growth and development level, which significantly affect the health status of the populations in these countries. Regardless of the economic and development level, several EMR countries are still suffering from the double burden of diseases. Further, EMR countries face many challenges in improving health and in progressing towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Progress towards achieving the SDGs in several EMR countries is constrained by many shortcomings that hinder improvement in health outcomes, such as limited resources, conflict and political instability.

The Eastern Mediterranean Public Health Network (EMPHNET) believes that change and transformation are key elements for progressing towards the SDGs, and that health is a basic right for all human beings wherever they live. EMPHNET's work is driven by deep interest and belief in the importance of achieving universal health coverage, which influence its initiatives and strategies. Therefore, consistent with SDG3: "Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages", EMPHNET adopts a transformational vision that guides its role and efforts towards assisting EMR countries in strengthening their health systems. Such efforts will contribute to meeting key health priorities and gaps that cover various public health areas, such as health protection and promotion, emergency preparedness and response, non-communicable diseases, communicable diseases, and more. In maximizing its contribution to the SDGs, EMPHNET acknowledges the role of different factors in influencing health and views many of the SDG challenges (such as those related to poverty, hunger, education, inequality, and climate change) as detrimental to achieving a healthy wellbeing. EMPHNET also acknowledges the essential role of public health institutions across the globe to achieve the SDG targets, which aim to transform the world by year 2030. Therefore, EMPHNET works on building national, regional, and global partnerships under SDG17; as well as securing global health opportunities

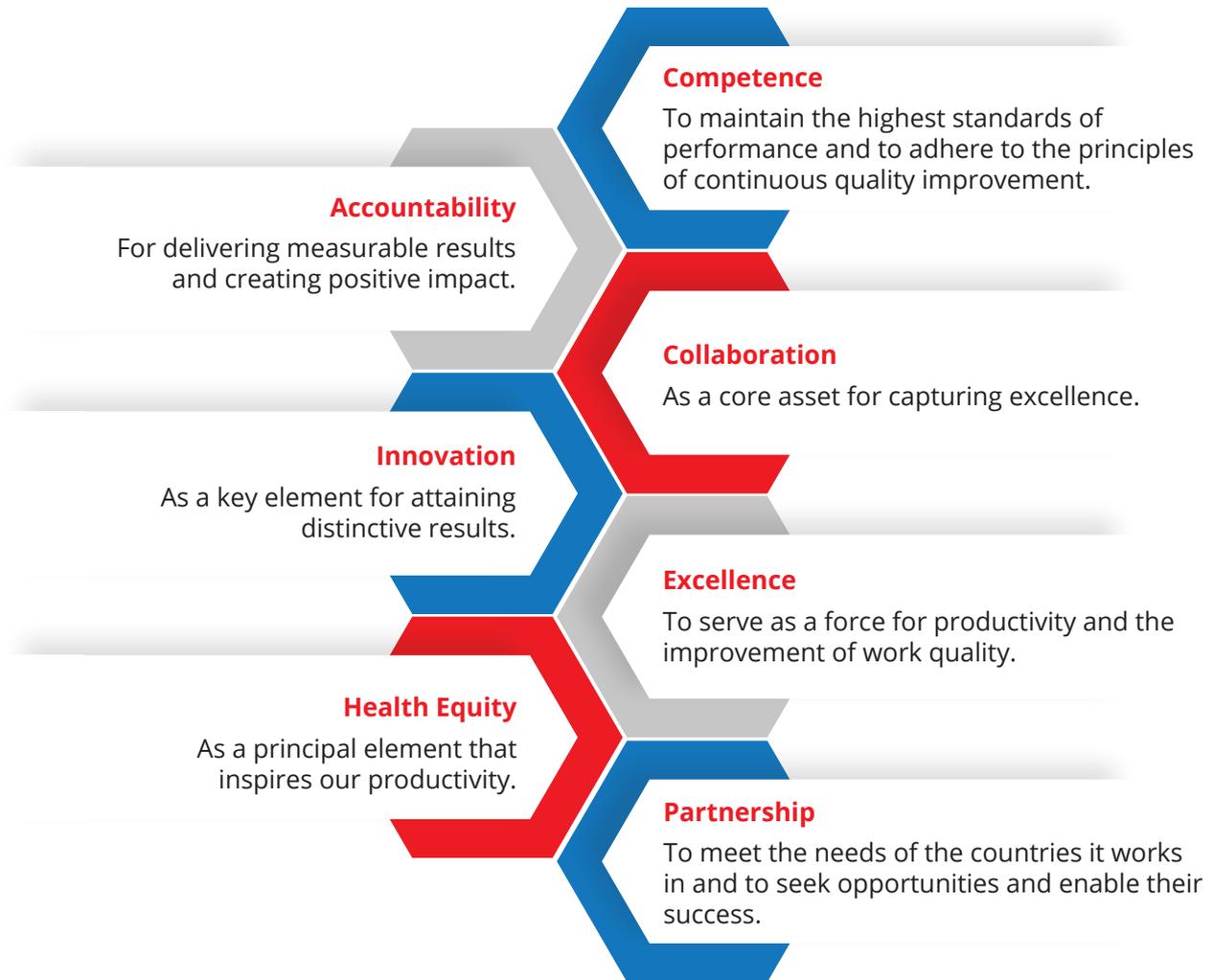
as an innovative strategy to support EMR countries build robust health systems to meet the SDG challenges.

With this context, EMPHNET established the Global Health Development (GHD) as an asset to maximize support towards positive change by seizing opportunities for backing up countries in influencing SDG progress. GHD was initiated to advance the work of EMPHNET by building coordinating mechanisms with Ministries of Health, International Organizations and other institutions to improve population health outcomes. As an implementing arm to EMPHNET, GHD aligns its strategies with national policies and directions. As a collaborative platform, GHD | EMPHNET serves the region by supporting national efforts to promote policy development, assure competent workforce, enhance communication and networking, monitor and evaluate programs, and other related services.



OUR VALUES

Our values are important for determining who we are, as they drive our work and include our core beliefs and ideas. These values drive our strategies and guide us in bringing about commitment, ownership and sustainability to our work.



ABOUT US

We invest in building workforce capacity in applied epidemiology by supporting Field Epidemiology Training Programs (FETPs) in more than ten countries, while ensuring country ownership of these programs. The increasing demand from several EMR countries to develop their capacities in various areas of public health urged us to expand our efforts in capacity building. These efforts were made to address key health priorities and gaps

that cover targeted public health areas, such as outreach and emergency, biorisk management, communicable diseases, and health protection and promotion. Our vision is to see people in the Eastern Mediterranean Region lead healthy lives and well-being. We aim to achieve our mission by working in four areas: Workforce Development, Public Health Programs, Research and Policy, and Communication and Networking.



Iraq Training on Cold Chain Equipment
Inventory Assessment
2017

OUR VISION

People in the Eastern
Mediterranean Region lead
healthy lives and well-being

OUR MISSION

To prevent and control diseases, to conduct and support operational research for priority public health domains, and to strengthen public health programs while working jointly with similar institutions associations, networks and organizations

OUR APPROACH

We adopt a comprehensive approach process to health systems strengthening, where we work at different levels to identify and respond to health challenges. We work at the regional, national and sub-national levels and tailor solutions to local context. Our approach to trigger change relies on reinforcing knowledge through regional, national, and subnational activities. We use a proactive learning approach to bring about effective problem solving and ownership of outcomes. Our commitment to support countries bring about change at the grass-root level is supported by a bottom-up approach to health system strengthening. Within this approach, action planning and program management is transformed at the peripheral level, thus producing national-level change.

In supporting countries in their goals to address health priorities, we put emphasis on engaging and involving stakeholders. We view this as an effective strategy for identifying potential opportunities and maximizing

the use of resources for rolling out broader actions to improve health outcomes. We implement research to generate information that can link policy to practice; and engage in operational research that contribute to countries' efforts to reach SDG targets through knowledge synthesis. Our work allows us to generate evidence from the region to share with the global health sector.

Our strength is generated by several enabling factors that allow us to affect change and contribute to better performing health systems in EMR countries. These factors stem from internal and external strengths as well as contextual factors that help maximize the effect and impact of opportunities sought to address challenges. Therefore, when working to achieve our mission, we collaborate with governments and employ a network of experts and professionals to conduct research and produce training material, toolkits and guidelines.



OUR AREAS OF EXPERTISE

Capacity Building

- Supporting countries meet the challenge of health system strengthening by empowering the public health workforce with knowledge and skills.
- Using capacity building in a variety of context and customize training content to country context and language.
- Using an integrated approach by using field experience, table top exercises, and case studies.
- Customizing training material and tools to fit the national and regional context.
- Engaging policy makers and managers in capacity building to ensure sustainable outcomes.
- Using a network of experts to foster and maximize a broad knowledge base transfer.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Supporting countries in strengthening their public health programs by empowering the public health workforce with monitoring and evaluation knowledge and skills.
- Integrating monitoring and evaluation activities in public health projects and field activities.
- Supporting monitoring and evaluation of public health interventions and projects.
- Supporting countries in developing monitoring and evaluation frameworks for public health programs.
- Designing and implementing assessment and evaluation frameworks for training programs.
- Undertaking assessment and evaluation missions to support countries in appraising programs or surveillance systems.

Data for Action

- Building a strong experience in applied research, data management and use, by partnering with public, private, academic, regional and global institutions.
- Training data collectors and research teams and investing in young researchers.
- Conducting and supporting research in different countries and using every opportunity to train national staff in data collection, data analysis, interpretation, and use for action.
- Engaging directly with ministries to support data for action and translate recommendations for improvements.

Technical Assistance

- Supporting countries technically in planning and managing programs to address public health challenges and meet gaps that hinder health system performance.
- Providing technical assistance in training, research, system development, monitoring and evaluation, digital solutions, health promotion, and more.
- Linking stakeholders and groups to maximize the advisory benefit of technical experts both nationally and regionally.
- Providing mentoring support tailored to country context.
- Partnering with public and private entities to maximize the uptake of technical services. Maintaining a roster of technical experts.

Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

- Supporting the development and use of ICT in learning through our Learning Management System (LMS) and distance learning approach.
- Assisting countries in exploring and using ICT solutions that support addressing public health challenges and gaps.
- Developing and using innovative ICT applications to enhance monitoring performance.
- Using innovative approaches in promoting the use of ICT in research and program management.
- Using ICT in education and learning to ease access to knowledge and mentorship.
- Using ICT for gathering/managing real-time data and extracting information from datasets using mobile/digital data collection tools.

Professional Translation

- Offering professional translation services to facilitate program implementation.
- Employing a network of professional translators who can translate content that includes reports, reviews, tools, presentations, educational and training material, and more.
- Using a thorough review process to ensure the highest level of quality and accuracy in translation.
- Arabic and English are the two major languages that we use in providing translations to content. French is another language that we use as well.

Logistics and Operations

- Managing various types of activities in several countries in the EMR, assisted by our links with ministries of health and relations with different stakeholders in the region.
- Employing in-country human resources to operate at the national and sub-national levels and to implement activities in their countries
- Supporting deployment processing of experts to EMR countries.
- Establishing partnerships with suppliers to facilitate timely and adequate delivery of commodities and equipment.
- Successfully providing logistics and operational support to stakeholders, relying on our long experience in arranging events regionally.

**GHD | EMPHNET is a
dynamic force for change**

OUR WORKING AREAS

Over the past years, GHD|EMPHNET succeeded in partnering with over 15 countries and has worked in close collaboration with a wide range of institutions, partners and implementers. We worked with different health providers and practitioners and have provided technical assistance to leverage country efforts and maximize resource use. Our deeply rooted collaboration with countries allowed us to drive and direct opportunities to correspond to priority needs of the countries. Further, our strategy allowed us to expand our efforts and tailor new working areas that target essential public health functions in addition to focusing on applied epidemiology, which was our initial onset area of concern.

GHD|EMPHNET
works with over 15
countries in the EMR
and collaborates with
partners from the region



Real-Time Surveillance of
Arba'een Mass Gathering
2018

OUR WORKING AREAS

Workforce Development

Investing in health workforce development is a key factor in strengthening health systems and in supporting progress towards reaching SDG targets. Building a stronger public health workforce improves health system performance by contributing to more effective and efficient service delivery.

GHD | EMPHNET contributes to building capacity as well as filling training gaps and needs in public health in the region, where we have been working on designing and conducting training courses. We have been supporting training in the region in various public health areas such as emergency management and rapid response, polio and routine immunization, leadership and management, biorisk management, risk communication, One Health, non-communicable diseases, environmental health, in addition to other training tailored to countries' specific needs.

At its Center of Excellence for Applied Epidemiology (CEAE), GHD | EMPHNET has established a Capacity Building Team (CBT) to be responsible for ensuring the quality of training and capacity building activities by applying standardized mechanisms of training development and methods for all GHD | EMPHNET training. Moreover, GHD | EMPHNET has a pool of highly professional trainers and subject matter experts, who are both content experts and teaching masters. Coming with regional and international experience from over 12 countries in the region, these trainers hold experience that range from field, organizational, governmental, and academic domains.

In addition to strengthening the capacity of the public health human resources working in a range of services, GHD | EMPHNET focuses on building capacity in applied epidemiology. We are committed to support Field Epidemiology Training Programs (FETPs) in EMR countries, as we believe that these programs are crucial for assuring

core epidemiologic competencies. These programs aim at applying scientific methods in the field, such as using epidemiologic methods to investigate health problems or outbreaks, as well as run analysis on data gathered through surveillance or other methods in order to generate evidence for decision makers. Core competencies gained by FETP training add value to meeting International Health Regulations (IHR) by building surveillance capacity and improving efficiency in monitoring disease incidence, prevalence, determinants, coverage, program evaluation, and expenditure data.

FETP training plays a crucial role in strengthening the response to unexpected health problems or events, thus containing and preventing their spread. Today, we work on integrating applied epidemiology concepts in strengthening a range of services as we believe that skilled field epidemiologists are core to a robust public health system.



PHEP-Nutrition Field Work
Sudan
2019

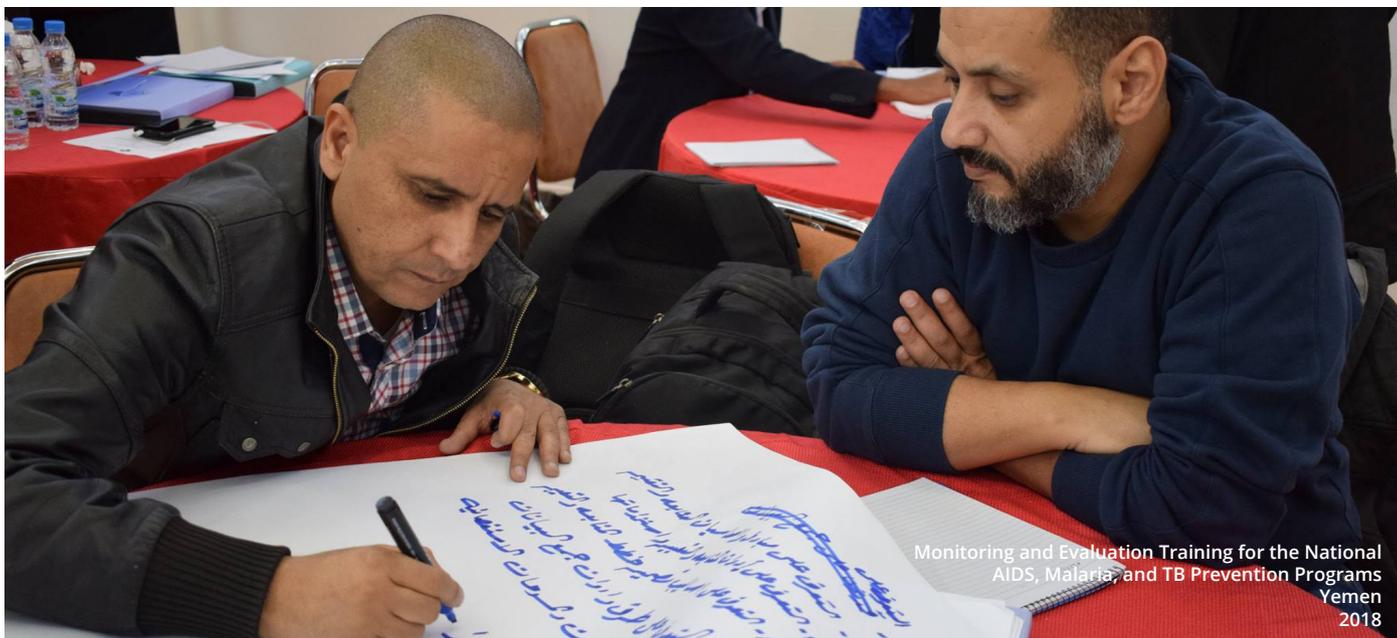
OUR WORKING AREAS

Public Health Programs

Preventing and controlling communicable and non-communicable diseases are essential for assuring healthy living and well-being. GHD | EMPHNET supports countries in delivering effective public health programs by building capacity; providing technical support; and conducting research to prevent and control emerging and reemerging diseases, vaccine preventable diseases, and non-communicable diseases. Focus areas under this domain include disease control and prevention, emergency and outreach, polio eradication and routine immunization, health protection and promotion, and environmental health. Since all health-related SDG targets cover health concerns that countries need to address by developing health programs and related interventions, GHD | EMPHNET supports EMR countries

in developing and strengthening public health programs. In doing so, we offer special attention to factors that significantly influence health and well-being, such as gender, culture, equity, sociopolitical, education, environment and the workplace. We consider women, children, and adolescent wellbeing as crucial for promoting development and resilience when targeting SDGs. We are strong believers in the importance of intersectoral and multidisciplinary coordination in promoting health within the context of sustainable development, for which we exhaust all opportunities set to bring focus to the One Health approach. Therefore, we invest in integrating environmental and animal health in actions that target preserving and promoting health and wellbeing.





Public Health Programs - Examples

Disease Control

- Strengthening Biorisk Management to ensure Biosafety, Biosecurity and Biocontainment and Biorisk Management
- Strengthening disease surveillance, e.g. Influenza, Brucellosis, Anthrax and Meningitis
- Laboratory capacity building and networking

Polio Eradication and Routine Immunization

- Supporting Transition of Polio Program assets to support control and elimination of other VPDs
- Maintaining Polio eradication function
- Increasing demand for immunization services

Outreach and Emergency

- Building National and Regional Rapid Response Teams
- Responding to disease outbreaks, e.g. Cholera, MERS-COV, West Nile Virus
- Supporting the development of national and sub-national Health Emergency Plans

Health Protection and Promotion

- Developing Maternal Mortality Surveillance System
- Developing Reproductive Health Registry
- Promoting healthy lifestyle to prevent and control NCDs

OUR WORKING AREAS

Research and Policy

Monitoring progress and performance is important for assuring progress towards SDG targets. GHD|EMPHNET supports countries in building robust and reliable information to support translating information into policies. We work with a range of institutions and build research experience for field epidemiologists, public health practitioners and young researchers while highlighting data collection challenges and providing appropriate digital solutions. We collaborate with academic and non-academic institutions to generate evidence that can guide policies by focusing on operational research, assessments and surveys, secondary data analysis and information generation, public health program monitoring and evaluation studies, and more.

Examples of such research projects include:

- Establishing a harmonized Reproductive Health Registry (hRHR) in Jordan to Improve Maternal and Child Health (2017-2020)
- The Effect of Increased Self- Efficacy and Knowledge (Using an Innovative Psychosocial Package) on Improved Sexual and Reproductive Health Service Use Among Adolescent Girls and Young Women Refugees (2018-2020)
- Real-Time Surveillance for Infectious Diseases during Iraq Arba'een Mass Gathering (2016 & 2018)
- Community Engagement to Increase Vaccine Demand in Afghanistan (2017)



OUR WORKING AREAS

Communication and Networking

Effective communication and broad networking are important for assessing gaps and for planning and delivering different health programs. We are creating a network of public health professionals and experts in the EMR to support program development and service delivery. We invest in communication and use it to advance information sharing as we believe that it is a key element for assuring robust data systems that countries need to secure in order to monitor their progress towards SDG targets. Our

networking efforts allows us to integrate capacities when assisting countries to explore solutions for meeting the challenges. GHD|EMPHNET remains committed to network regionally and globally in order to attract opportunities and partnerships that support investment in programs that support implementation of the SDGs. We take pride in collaborating with Ministries of Health, and partnering with Regional and International organizations, as well as private sector and academic institutions.



OUR NETWORKING AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE PLATFORMS

Internship

GHD|EMPHNET provides an opportunity for students and fresh graduates to work in and learn from working in a rapidly expanding, multi-field public health organization. The internship program allows candidates to be part of in GHD|EMPHNET's different work settings, while supporting their own initiatives or projects. GHD|EMPHNET provides interns with an opportunity to apply professional public health competencies and skills, thus preparing them to work with confidence in real public health settings. Interns at GHD|EMPHNET are mentored by skilled and experienced supervisors who supervise their internship and help them link theory to practice.

At GHD|EMPHNET, we match the career interest and preference of interns with work situations that allows them to maximize the use of the knowledge they gained during school education. We respect and encourage interns to be self-motivated while bearing responsibility to their own learning. Our internship program is in high demand with candidates seeking experience in different areas, including infectious diseases, applied epidemiology, health promotion, media and communication, and more. We admit interns who are highly committed to public health, hard workers, focused, with the ability and willingness to engage in different public health activities.



Interns at GHD|EMPHNET
2019

OUR NETWORKING AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE PLATFORMS

Field Epidemiology Exchange Program (FEETP)

Considering the diversity of public health emergencies, outbreak investigations, and challenges in the EMR, it is of great importance that FETP residents or students studying public health at a university setting get exposed to a broad range of field experiences. As a leading regional public health network, GHD|EMPHNET strives to provide an exchange platform to promote applied epidemiology experience-sharing between countries, as the levels of health care and system development differ among EMR countries. This exchange program seeks to expand the network of public health experts and field epidemiologists in the region by promoting a diverse field experience. By establishing the Field Epidemiology Exchange Program (FEETP), GHD|EMPHNET provides the FETP residents and university students with an opportunity to join other FETP programs in EMR countries for a specific period of time for the purpose of gaining new experiences. Such a program was established in response to a request by FETPs and public health academic institutions in the EMR based on a need to foster public health competencies. In addition to the exchange and network expansion benefits, the FEETP aims to strengthen regional public health emergency response as well as promote coordination between ministries of health in the region. The program will result in an increased number of epidemiologists and public health professionals trained in surveillance and field investigations, capable of defining health measures to control disease outbreaks in the region.



FETP Yemen in the Field
2016

OUR NETWORKING AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE PLATFORMS

Conferences

GHD|EMPHNET works to link, support, and strengthen public health programs in EMR countries. We conduct a biannual regional conference as an opportunity for public health professionals and field epidemiologists working in the EMR to exchange experience and get exposed to new ideas and skills. The conference presents a platform to “showcase” achievements in research, outbreak investigations, assessments, evaluation and more. In addition to public health networking, the conference provides the region with a special opportunity for demonstrating progress and innovation in applied epidemiology across countries.

To date, we have conducted six regional conferences, where over 1,000 scientific pieces of work were presented. The number of submissions and accepted abstracts to GHD|EMPHNET conferences escalated over the years, making such conferences recognizable with a competitive pursue.



Fourth EMPHNET Regional Conference 2018



Sixth EMPHNET Regional Conference 2018

EMPHNET Public Health Forum (PHF)

We initiated the EMPHNET-PHF as a vehicle to facilitate open discussions and debate on issues, challenges, concerns and priorities that play a role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). By fostering partnership, knowledge exchange, networking, and evidence in action, the EMPHNET-PHF aims to enable integration of public health in support of achieving SDG3 “Ensure healthy lives and promote

wellbeing for all at all ages” and its 13 targets. As a key strategic platform, the EMPHNET-PHF aims to bring health leaders and professionals from different fields together as a step towards promoting a collaborative, multi-sectoral approach to sharing information and examining premises that impact the development of public health in support of a sustained health development.

EMPHNET is guided by its commitment to change and acknowledges knowledge sharing as an ongoing iterative process

EpiShares

GHD|EMPHNET developed and launched a networking platform (EpiShares) designed to join public health professionals and experts in a space where they can express thoughts, address concerns and discuss issues relevant to public health issues. As a unique public health community of practice, EpiShares enables public health professionals and experts to come together to reflect and explore solutions necessary for managing public health challenges and doubtful situations in various settings. Through EpiShares, we tap on advances in technology to offer an ideal environment that would grant members a

chance to ponder into a common space where they can examine interests of other colleagues, identify colleagues with mutual interests, and seek advice or opinion of experts. We are enabling members of EpiShares to share articles, opportunities, tools, training resources, and other essential elements needed to enhance their performance and expand their scope and perspectives. EpiShares will be the space that will embrace its members’ credentials and will grow into a powerful public health sphere whereby experts can be accessed and contacted for building initiatives, programs or schemes.



OUR CONTRIBUTION

GHD|EMPHNET implemented activities to support strengthening of public health systems in EMR countries. Through collaborative efforts with partners and cooperation with ministries of health, GHD|EMPHNET managed to reach a status that is recognized at the regional and global levels. Our commitment to the region together with the increased trust and assertion from the countries helped us build a strong portfolio, made possible with an interconnected effort that continues to nurture and foster merit for better health to people living in the EMR.

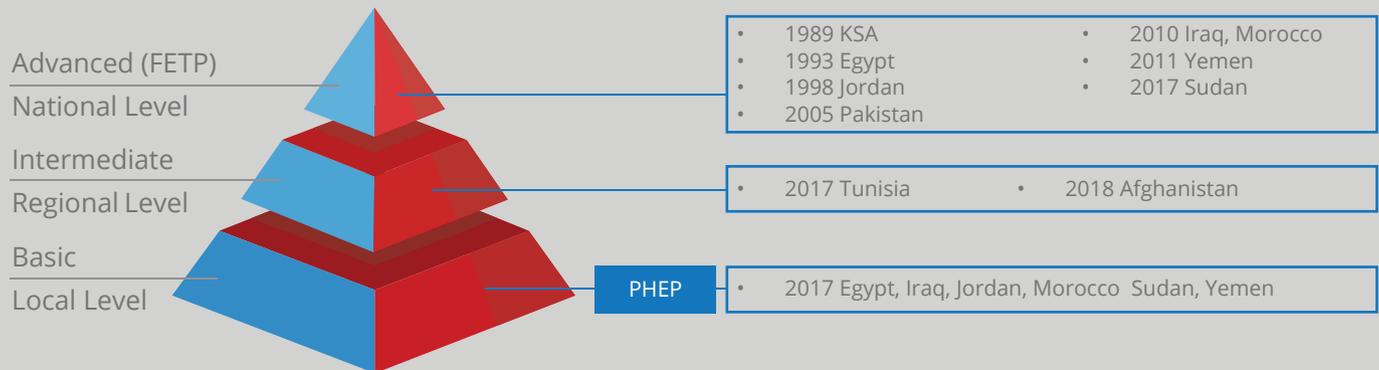


Steering Committee Meeting for Brucellosis Project in Jordan 2019

A Broader Context to Applied Epidemiology

Within its expansion to reach new countries in the region, GHD|EMPHNET now works with more than 15 countries from the EMR. Since 2008, our field epidemiology networking umbrella in the EMR has expanded from four to more than ten, yielding around 900 FETP residents and graduates as of 2018. Furthermore, GHD|EMPHNET expanded its FETP modality by starting to apply the

three-month program (Public Health Empowerment Program – PHEP) and the one-year intermediate program, in addition to the two-year program modality. Currently, Tunisia, and Afghanistan are applying one-year intermediate program besides many countries in the region that already started applying the PHEP three-month program.



OUR CONTRIBUTION

A Concentrated Effort in Public Health Programs

GHD|EMPHNET served on the Joint External Evaluation Mission for Iraq, Jordan, Sudan, Tunisia, Lebanon, and Libya. Between 2012 and 2018, we invested efforts in building the capacity of rapid response teams at the regional, national, and sub-national levels by training more than 600 public health professionals. GHD|EMPHNET also participated in several Polio Independent Reviews in the region. During 2018, GHD|EMPHNET trained more than 3000 public health professionals in a wide range of topics, including: non-communicable diseases, rapid response, biosafety and biosecurity, surveillance, microplanning, research, laboratory testing for Brucellosis, and more.



A Wider Involvement in Research and Policy



GHD|EMPHNET conducted more than 50 operational research projects, studies and field surveys related to various public health working areas, including polio eradication and routine immunization, non-communicable diseases, biosafety and biosecurity, outreach and emergency, health protection and promotion, and communicable diseases. We have also successfully published various scientific articles and case studies in peer reviewed journals. In addition, we use the mini-grants approach to supports young scientists from the region.

OUR CONTRIBUTION A Richer Encounter in Communication and Networking

A Richer Encounter in Communication and Networking
Since 2009, we had been engaged in several activities that served to both strengthen our presence and expand our network. One of our key networking initiatives is our bi-annual regional conference. To date, we held six regional conferences that served to bring together FETP residents, graduates, public health professionals, and researchers from a wide range of institutions. The sessions making up the conference's agenda provide a space for their participants to exchange research findings as well as experiences from the field, allowing for over 1,000 scientific studies to be presented on issues of immediate relevance to the public health needs of the region.

Over the years, we also managed to increase our involvement with different stakeholders and partners at regional and international levels. We currently work closely with a wide range of similar institutions and Networks, and we also have standing memberships within several networks and initiatives that share our goals and outlooks including: the steering committee for "Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network (GAORN)", the international Joint External Evaluation (JEE) Alliance, the RRT Global Network, TEPHINET, and the NCD Alliance.

GHD|EMPHNET has also contributed to Global Health Security, whereby it has been playing an active role in the coordination and mobilization of field deployments in countries of the region. Our international contributions in this area are facilitated through our collaboration with partners such as GOARN and regarding operations such as the Yellow Fever Outbreak Response in Sudan (2012), the Ebola Outbreak Response in West Africa (2014), and Cholera Outbreak Response in Somalia (2017).

Further responding to the needs of the region and adhering to advancements in digital technology, GHD|EMPHNET has also reflected its networking efforts online thus launching its own networking platform early 2018 "EpiShares". Today, EpiShares serves as an online platform dedicated to public health professionals. It offers a virtual community for FETP residents and graduates, as well as public health experts from the region and across the globe to share knowledge, experiences, and ideas that could elevate their work. EpiShares provides its members with the opportunity to share posts relevant to public health issues. It also allows members to interact with such posts and create groups on specific areas of interest, among other features.



GOARN Steering Committee Meeting
2019



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