



EMPHNET

The Eastern Mediterranean
Public Health Network

ADVANCING CONTEXT-BASED SOLUTIONS FOR BETTER HEALTH ANNUAL REPORT 2024

► GHD | EMPHNET: working
together for better health





2024 ANNUAL REPORT

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WORD FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The past year posed significant challenges for the region, characterized by increasing public health emergencies due to ongoing or emerging conflicts and climate-induced natural disasters. These challenges surfaced at a time when the region was still dealing with the aftermath of a pandemic that had rendered its health systems vulnerable.

Extraordinary circumstances required equally extraordinary efforts, not necessarily in terms of scale or scope, but in approach. What was needed was the development of solutions tailored to the unique and sometimes complex contexts of affected countries. This is precisely what EMPHNET continued to adopt and implement, aligning its initiatives with national priorities while adapting global strategies to effectively address local challenges. EMPHNET has customized Field Epidemiology Training Programs (FETPs) to meet emerging regional demands. Over the past year, EMPHNET continued its public health emergency management efforts by empowering rapid response leadership, enhancing community engagement, and ensuring the continuity of care.

EMPHNET generated research that is firmly grounded in regional realities, while maintaining its pioneering role in implementation research, particularly focusing on non-communicable diseases (NCDs), strengthening primary healthcare (PHC) systems, and supporting the health of women and children. This knowledge was disseminated globally through various platforms, with the EMPHNET Regional Conference serving as a premier venue for knowledge exchange for and from the EMR. EMPHNET has successfully supported immunization programs aimed at reaching underserved communities, advanced the prevention and control of NCDs among vulnerable populations, strengthened health security in fragile settings, and championed the One Health approach through capacity building and enhanced surveillance.

Through these concerted efforts, EMPHNET demonstrated its ability to drive positive change under challenging circumstances by leveraging its understanding of local needs and deep knowledge of global health sciences.

Dr. Mohannad Al Nsour
EMPHNET Executive Director



Somalia @EMPHNET

ACTIVE PARTNERSHIPS AND PROJECTS



● Active Partnerships ● Public Health Emergency Management ● Workforce Development ● Biorisk Management ● One Health ● NCDs ● Women and Child Health ● Immunization ● Research



TAILORING PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT TO COUNTRY CONTEXT

In response to public health emergencies in the EMR, EMPHNET adapted its Health Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Resilience (HEPR) strategies to fit the diverse contexts of various countries. Leveraging years of experience in challenging environments, EMPHNET continued to strengthen workforce capacities for emergency preparedness and planning, recognizing the region’s human

capital as a critical resource. Additionally, the organization focused on empowering Rapid Response Teams (RRTs) and engaging communities to enhance emergency response efforts. EMPHNET also invested in improving surveillance systems, expanding them to incorporate an integrated and comprehensive range of information sources.

INSTITUTIONALIZING RAPID RESPONSE TEAMS (RRTS)

EMPHNET recognizes the importance of strategic leadership and a systematic approach to building RRTs within the broader national emergency framework. Since 2019, EMPHNET has actively supported several countries in establishing and institutionalizing Public Health Rapid Response systems and programs as part of the public health emergency response frameworks. These efforts focused on creating a systematic

and standardized method for forming and managing RRTs, following the guidelines set forth in the “Guidance for U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Staff for the Establishment and Management of Public Health Rapid Response Teams for Disease Outbreaks.” This effort not only promotes regional harmonization but also aligns with global standards.

ENHANCING AND EXPANDING DISEASE SURVEILLANCE CAPACITIES

Supporting Early Warning and Response Through Event-Based Surveillance Integration

EMPHNET continues to support to ministries of health in several countries within the EMR to improve disease surveillance and Early Warning and Response (EWAR) systems, with a particular focus on event-based surveillance (EBS). EMPHNET assisted these ministries in adapting communicable disease surveillance systems for emergency

situations, facilitating early reporting, detection, and response. The organization also supported investments in integrated disease surveillance (IDS) systems, which incorporate EBS to collect and analyze potential public health risks from sources beyond routine surveillance systems.

KEY RESULTS

✓ EMPHNET adopts a country-tailored approach to institutionalizing RRT capacities at national and subnational levels

- Analysis of Emergency Preparedness and Response Capacities
- RRT Management Training and SOP Development for the Rapid Response program/system
- Development of a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for the Rapid Response Team program/system
- Stakeholder Engagement to finalize and endorse the developed multi-sectoral Rapid Response program/system
- Adaptation of “RRT All-Hazard Training and Program Overview and Onboarding” Workshop materials, including a Skill Drill/simulation exercise
- ToT on RRT All-Hazard Training and Program Overview and Onboarding Workshop

✓ RRT Management Systems have been established in Jordan and Pakistan, bringing the total number to 7 with Egypt, Iraq, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, and Tunisia

✓ Geographical coverage of EBS implementation in Lebanon, Morocco, and Sudan



Lebanon:
7 governorates: Beirut, Mount Lebanon, Bekaa, Akkar, North, South, and Baalback



Morocco:
3 administrative regions: Rabat-Salé-Kénitra Sidi Kacem Salé, Casablanca-Settat Moulay Rachid Benslimane, Tanger-Tetouan-Al Hoceima



Sudan:
2 states: Khartoum and White Nile

✓ EMPHNET’s support in implementing EBS

- Capacity building for EBS focal points, surveillance officers, and frontline personnel at subnational and community levels
- Development of technical documents: EBS guidelines, SOPs, supervision checklists, and M&E tools
- Supervisory visits conducted and monitoring of generated surveillance reports



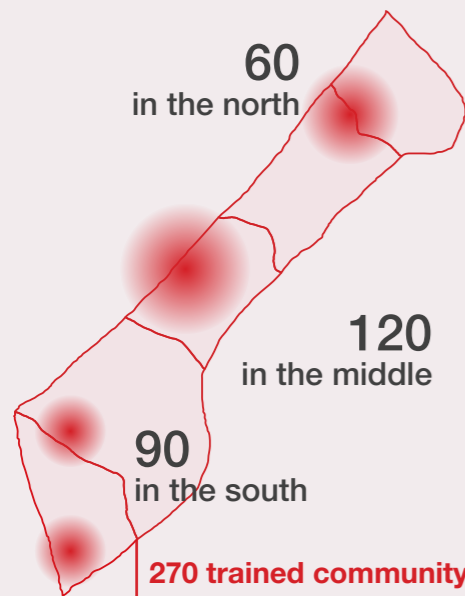
SCALING UP COMMUNITY-LED RESPONSE

EMPHNET Community Health Champion Program (ChampNet) in the Gaza Strip

EMPHNET established a strong network of about 270 volunteers who are trained in various health-related fields, including health promotion, service delivery, and mental health counseling. These volunteers have been instrumental in supporting the ongoing response efforts of health organizations and the Ministry of Health (MoH) in Gaza. The distribution of these volunteers across Gaza helps address the challenges of accessibility to healthcare services.

KEY RESULTS

Support Provided by Community Health Champion Program in Gaza



270 trained community health workers

Distribution of ChampNet's network across the Gaza Strip

- Health awareness
- Community mobilization
- Vaccination post campaign monitoring
- Malnutrition Screening and Treatment
- Counseling on breastfeeding



Gaza @EMPHNET

Volunteers for Vector Control (V4V) in Sudan

In an urgent response to the rising threat of vector-borne diseases, EMPHNET, in partnership with Sudan's Federal MoH and the Kassala State MoH, launched the Volunteers for Vector Control (V4V) project. This community-based initiative aims to train local volunteers in high-risk areas to control mosquito populations through Larval Source Management. This approach focuses on identifying and targeting mosquito breeding sites within communities to reduce the transmission of dengue and malaria.

The V4V Project: Major Achievements

- 300 volunteers trained
- Guidelines developed to enable volunteer-led vector control
- Digital reporting tool developed to enable real-time data collection and communication



Sudan @EMPHNET



ADVOCATING FOR MULTI-SECTORAL HEALTH RESPONSE IN EMERGING EMERGENCIES

Gaza

EMPHNET launched the International Gaza Forum to raise global awareness of the health emergency in the Strip, aiming to meet priority needs, ensure access to humanitarian aid, and mobilize necessary resources. The forum concluded with the creation of evidence-based recommendations targeting partners, donors, and implementers, and were presented during EMPHNET's Eighth Regional Conference.

Support for the Gaza Health Initiative


EMPHNET has been actively supporting a multinational coalition of healthcare and humanitarian organizations dedicated to assisting the people of Gaza. As a member of the Gaza Health Initiative, EMPHNET is engaged in advocacy efforts, particularly focusing on documenting and publicizing the ongoing health crises and the services being provided.

International Campaign to Support the Health Sector in Sudan




In June 2024, EMPHNET launched the International Campaign to Support the Health Sector in Sudan to catalyze meaningful and sustained action in response to the country's ongoing crisis. The campaign aimed to bring together diverse stakeholders in a forum that encourages collective efforts to provide immediate relief, rebuild the health infrastructure, and establish a resilient health system for the future. Special emphasis was placed on investing in human capital, particularly focusing on health workers and community volunteers. Additionally, the campaign highlighted the importance of comprehensive, inclusive, and multi-sectoral planning to secure financial, technical, and material resources from international donors, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and private sector partners.



Sudan @EMPHNET

 Dr. Mohannad Al Nsour, was elected as the Chair of the Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network (GOARN) Steering Committee, after previously serving as the committee's Deputy Chair and representing EMPHNET as a member of GOARN since 2013. Under Dr. Al Nsour's stewardship, the network is set to expand its reach, deepen its impact, and remain a cornerstone of global outbreak preparedness and response.

Objectives of the Gaza Health Forum

-  Identifying short and long term health priorities using an evidence-based approach
-  Providing a situational overview of current health system activities
-  Creating opportunities for stakeholders in the health sector to collaborate

Recommendations by the International Gaza Forum

Recommended Short-term Goals for Health Response

-  To reconstruct damaged health facilities
-  To advocate for legal protection for health workers
-  To provide critical supplies
-  To immediately open borders and mobilize Medical Evacuations
-  To prevent the spread of communicable diseases

International Campaign to Support Sudan: The Achievements

-  **Mapping Stakeholders** who are active in the response, detailing their specific contributions, geographic focus, and areas of work
-  **Developing a Comprehensive Health Action Plan** for overhauling the health system
-  **Hosting** the "International Campaign to Support the Health Sector in Sudan" through EMPHNET's 41st webinar and the Forum to Support the Health Sector in Sudan during EMPHNET's Eighth Regional conference

Palestine @EMPHNET





CONTEXTUALIZING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING INITIATIVES FOR IMPACT

EMPHNET dedicated resources to designing and implementing capacity-building initiatives tailored to individual countries. It launched additional cohorts and modalities for FETPs and developed new topical modalities to address specific contextual needs. The organization placed a strong emphasis on enhancing learning through multiple formats,

including face-to-face, online, and blended learning, to facilitate knowledge uptake and address shortages in the public health workforce in critical areas. As the regional network for FETPs, EMPHNET continued to prioritize the sustainability of these programs as a cornerstone of the public health workforce in the region.

TAILORING PROGRAMS TO COUNTRY NEEDS

In 2024, several versions of FETPs have been developed and customized to meet specific country and topical needs. The table below lists the FETP versions that were launched and/or implemented during this year.

	 Basic (3 months)	 Intermediate (One Year)	 Intermediate/advanced (two years)
Program	Public Health Empowerment Program- Surveillance for Polio Officers (PHEP-SPO)	FETP One Health	FETP Mental Health
Focus	Polio surveillance systems and early detection and response to cases, especially in high-risk areas	Enhancing knowledge in One Health approaches and collaborations, enabling participants to apply epidemiological skills to issues that span human, animal, and environmental health	This program equips field epidemiologists with the knowledge and tools to assess, monitor, and respond to mental health challenges, particularly in crises or emergency settings
Countries	Afghanistan, Lebanon, and Sudan	Egypt	Developed, not yet implemented



Sudan @EMPHNET



EMPOWERING FETP SUSTAINABILITY

Monitoring and Evaluation

Over the last year, EMPHNET continued to support monitoring and evaluation (M&E) as essential tools for improving program effectiveness and guiding future resource allocation. It conducted evaluations that have helped determine the programs' impact and assess how various components contributed to achieving desired outcomes. EMPHNET also supported M&E plans and guidelines for training programs, projects, interventions, and research related to FETPs.

FETP Evaluations conducted by EMPHNET in support of programs both regionally and globally.

Evaluation of field epidemiology training programs: a scoping review

- Mohannad Al Nsour¹
- Ghena Khasawneh¹
- Yousef Khader^{2*}
- Haitham Bashier¹

Evaluation of the blended public health empowerment program-basic field epidemiology in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

- Ruba Kamal Alsouri^{1*}
- Yousef Khader^{2†}
- Haitham Bashier^{1†}
- Mirwais Amiri^{1†}
- Sara Abdelkarim Morsy^{3†}
- Zainab Naseer Abbas^{4†}
- Zeina Elias Farah^{5†}
- Mohannad Al Nsour^{1†}

Supporting Multi-National and Multi-Sectoral FETP Collaborations

EMPHNET maintained its support for multi-sectoral technical and financial collaboration to significantly improve the quality and impact of FETPs while also promoting their sustainability. EMPHNET partnered with various organizations including the Global Field Epidemiology Partnership (GFEP) and other stakeholders involved in FETPs. Together, they are exploring, proposing, and implementing strategies, initiatives, and recommendations aimed at strengthening FETPs on both regional and global levels.

KEY RESULTS

Building Capacities of FETP Residents in Scientific Writing

Conducting a series of virtual live sessions focused on **“Strengthening Scientific Writing Skills”**

Around **35** participants from **10+** countries

Conducting a Regional **Workshop on Developing Teaching Case-Studies** in Field Epidemiology and Public Health

18 FETP residents and graduates

Notable Achievement

Iraq FETP Gains Accreditation for Both its **Advanced** and **Intermediate** Modalities



Afghanistan @EMPHNET

FETP COHORT LAUNCHES AND COMPLETIONS

Afghanistan
1st PHEP-SPO launched
5th intermediate cohort completed
6th intermediate cohort launched

Bangladesh
2nd FETP-V basic cohort launched
2nd intermediate cohort completed
4th intermediate cohort launched

Egypt
22nd advanced cohort launched
FETP One Health intermediate cohort launched

Iraq
4th intermediate cohort launched

Jordan
21st advanced cohort launched

Lebanon
3rd PHEP-BFE cohort completed

Libya
3rd PHEP-BFE cohort launched

Morocco
2nd and 3rd Intermediate cohorts completed

Oman
3rd and 4th PHEP-BFE cohorts launched

Pakistan
15th, 16th, 17th, 18th, and 19th cohorts of frontline FETP completed
14th advanced cohort completed

Qatar
2nd and 3rd PHEP-BFE cohorts completed
1st intermediate cohort launched

Saudi Arabia
New advanced cohort launched

Sudan
2nd and 3rd intermediate cohorts completed
6th PHEP-SPO launched

Tunisia
3rd PHEP-BFE launched

Yemen
5th PHEP-BFE launched in Aden
2nd Intermediate cohort launched in Aden
6th advanced cohort completed in Sana'a
2nd intermediate cohort completed in Sana'a



ADVANCING INNOVATIVE LEARNING INITIATIVES

International Academy of Public Health (IAPH)

The International Academy of Public Health (IAPH), EMPHNET's academic arm, continues to support public health workforce capacity in the EMR through its practice-based specialized training programs, courses, and certifications and through its growing network of partners across academic and non-academic sectors.

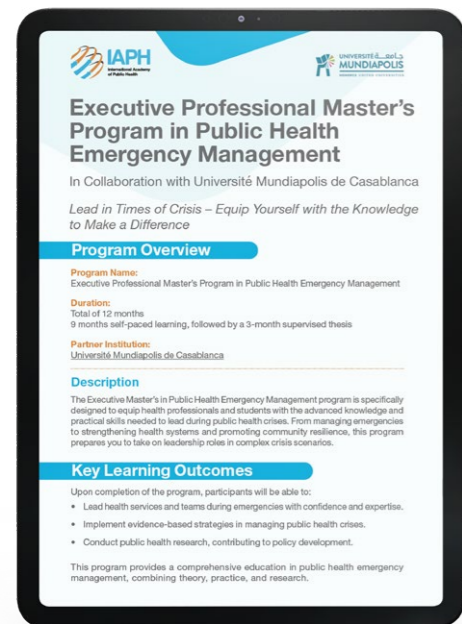
Progress of IAPH's Capacity-Building Efforts in 2024



700+
trainees



27
courses/programs
implemented



Check out the latest Professional Master's Program in Public Health Emergency Management

<https://bit.ly/3YOeDer>

UNIVERSITY COLLABORATIONS

University of Science and Technology - Jordan



Launch of **3 joint online self-paced courses** in



Research Methodology



Biostatistics



Health Economics

Ajloun National University - Jordan



Launch of a **9-month professional Environmental Health Diploma**

Hadhramaut University - Yemen



Embedding research courses in the **Public Health PhD Program**

Alamein International University - Egypt



Embedding courses in the **undergraduate Public Health Program**

Mohammed VI Foundation of Sciences and Health – Morocco



Embedding foundational courses in the **Public Health Master Program**

EMPHNET's Learning Management System (LMS)

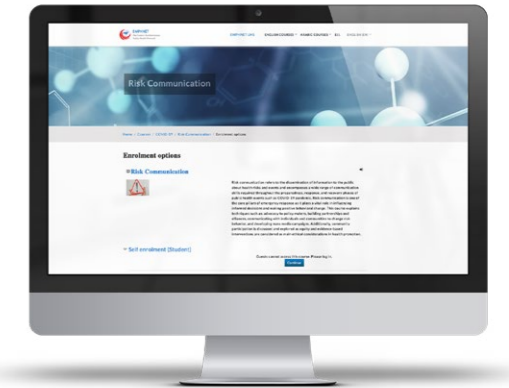
EMPHNET launched **three courses** and continues to provide e-learning support to the organization and other entities by offering courses and digitizing toolkits



1,045
enrolled
participants

**Check out
EMPHNET's LMS**

<https://lms.emphnet.net>



EMPHNET's Electronic Library (EEL)

EEL remains a valuable resource for public health professionals in the Eastern Mediterranean Region



1,376
logins



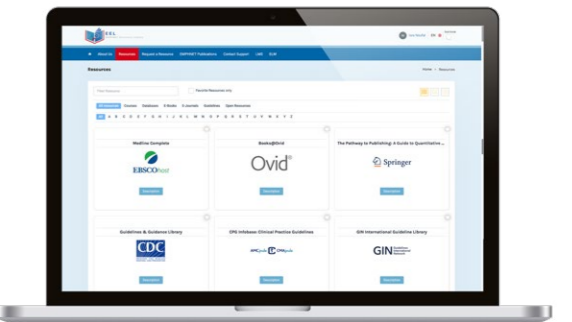
116
new users



30+
new
publications

**Check out
EMPHNET's E-Library**

<https://library.emphnet.net/home>





HARNESSING RESEARCH FOR REAL-WORLD IMPACT

EMPHNET has been actively building the capacities of researchers and supporting continuous learning in research-related areas. The organization also placed special emphasis on investigating priority research areas, for which it is assisting countries across the EMR in conducting epidemiological and implementation research, identifying implementation barriers and enablers, evaluating program impact, developing and

monitoring interventions, and assessing and addressing health needs. Additionally, EMPHNET made the advancement of research and publications a core agenda item. It successfully completed several implementation and operational research projects that focus on various areas, including the use of innovative technologies to support the implementation of public health programs.



BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN KNOWING AND DOING: USING IMPLEMENTATION AND OPERATIONAL RESEARCH TO ENHANCE INTERVENTIONS

EMPHNET maintained its commitment to leading and advancing high-quality implementation research and operations research to support innovative solutions and cost-effective strategies aimed at improving public health practice in the EMR. It continued to pioneer this effort alongside ministries of health, universities, research institutions, and the private sector. Projects have been completed, offering recommendations for better operations as well as alternative implementation strategies for effective programs, policies, and practices.



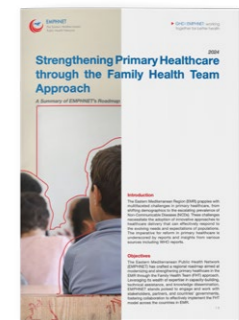
For Comprehensive Primary Health Care Services

An implementation research project developed a roadmap for modernizing primary health care services in Jordan through the innovative Family Health Teams approach as a partnership between physicians at the primary healthcare setting, family medicine physicians, nurses, community health workers, and other health service providers to coordinate the highest possible quality of care for patients.

The perspective on this roadmap was published in [Healthcare](#).



Outcome: This initiative resulted in the development of the [Strengthening Primary Health Care - EMPHNET Roadmap](#), designed to be applied in broader contexts for strengthening primary healthcare systems.



For Better NCDs Control and Prevention in Humanitarian Settings

An implementation research project expanded the implementation of the Jordan Integrated NCD Humanitarian Response project, a multi-partner health promotion and capacity building initiative brought about through Healthy School Programs, Healthy Community Clinics, Community Health Committees, and Community Based organizations.



Outcome: It enhanced the implementation and the institutionalization and integration of these programs into national initiatives and strategies.



PEER-REVIEWED RESEARCH

Research and publications, including peer-reviewed literature, expert viewpoints, policy briefs, and other publications, continued to be fundamental to EMPHNET's mission, providing evidence to enrich technical support and capacity-building efforts that EMPHNET provides across the region and beyond. This evidence will be vital for addressing public health challenges with context-specific solutions as it advances public health knowledge, shapes policy, and guides public health practice.



Bangladesh @EMPHNET

EMPHNET PUBLISHED RESEARCH IN 2024

-  [Assessing One Health capacities for transboundary zoonotic diseases at the Libya-Tunisia border](#)

Journal: *One Health Outlook*

Conclusions *Development of targeted recommendations to address limitations in prevention and detection and response capacities for joint action planning between Libya and Tunisia.*

-  [The Provision of Psychosocial Support to Students in Jordan: Teachers' Knowledge, Attitudes, Skills, Practices, and Perceived Barriers](#)

Journal: *Journal of School Health*

Conclusions *Effective interventions must consider multiple factors that influence implementation at various levels, including the individual, relational, community, and societal levels.*

-  [Evaluation of field epidemiology training programs: a scoping review](#)

Journal: *Frontiers*

Conclusions *Strategies to enhance FETP evaluations include clear objectives, standardized metrics, benchmarking, stakeholder feedback, and tracking graduates' progress and contributions.*

-  [Evaluation of the blended public health empowerment program-basic field epidemiology in the Eastern Mediterranean Region](#)

Journal: *Frontiers*

Conclusions *Blended PHEP-BFE was successful in advancing public health training in diverse contexts evident in positive participant reactions and improved competencies.*

-  [Addressing emerging public health threats: the Noncommunicable Disease Capacity Assessment and Planning \(N-CAP\) Process](#)

Journal: *Frontiers*

Conclusions *The article points to the N-CAP's potential for broader implementation to combat the rising global burden of NCDs.*



FOSTERING KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE FROM AND FOR THE EMR

EMPHNET continued to support the dissemination of knowledge from the region on both regional and international platforms, online and offline, believing this is a valuable way to showcase insights from national experts, professionals, and researchers who have firsthand understanding of local challenges. It accelerated knowledge sharing through various initiatives, including publication, resource dissemination, and networking events such as its biennial regional conference and monthly webinars. Additionally, EMPHNET provided learning opportunities for young public health professionals and students through its Engage Internship Program.

THE EIGHTH EMPHNET REGIONAL CONFERENCE

In line with its ongoing commitment to fostering regional collaboration and knowledge sharing, EMPHNET maintained the tradition of holding its regional conference every two years. This conference has served as a vital platform for public health experts from the EMR and beyond to engage in meaningful dialogue. By ensuring representation from the region, EMPHNET emphasized the importance of incorporating local perspectives and insights into the unique public health challenges faced by EMR communities. Over the past decade, hundreds of residents and graduates from the FETP, along with other public health professionals, have enriched the public health landscape by sharing their field experiences at EMPHNET conferences.



Jordan @EMPHNET

HIGHLIGHTS

The central theme for the Eighth EMPHNET Regional Conference was “Advancing Public Health Preparedness and Response: Challenges, Opportunities, and Ways Forward”

The Agenda

1. Conference workshops
2. Roundtables
3. Abstract Oral and Poster Presentations
4. A Keynote Address
5. Guest Speakers’ Panel Sessions
6. Forums
7. Side Meetings

In Numbers

- 67** oral presentations
- 20** poster presentations
- 8** roundtables
- 5** conference workshops
- 25+** countries represented
- 3** panel discussions
- 2** forums
- 300** public health professionals

The Abstract Sessions by Theme

- Communicable Diseases
- Disease Surveillance
- Immunization and Vaccine-Preventable Diseases
- Outbreak Investigations
- Polio and AFP Surveillance
- COVID-19
- Non-Communicable Diseases
- Public Health Surveillance
- Emergencies and Mass Gatherings
- Maternal and Child Health
- Others



Jordan @EMPHNET



EMPHNET WEBI SERIES

EMPHNET's monthly webinars evolved into important resources by amplifying local voices and providing informed perspectives on the region's challenges. The EMPHNET WEBi Series has become a platform for advocating pressing health issues, and accelerating support, coordination, and collaboration, particularly benefiting crisis-affected countries. In addition to fostering discussions, the webinars have resulted in tangible outcomes, such as the production of policy briefs.

ENGAGE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Accredited by the Agency for Public Health Education Accreditation (APHEA), the EMPHNET Internship Program, Engage, is expanding to welcome students and graduates from diverse academic backgrounds. Engage also continues to supply EMPHNET with a pool of potential talents and human resources that could benefit the organization's work in the future.

HIGHLIGHTS

EMPHNET WEBi Series

7 webinars were conducted in 2023-2024, featuring a total of **22** speakers

1. [Hosting a Forum to Support the Health Sector in Sudan](#)
2. [Marking One Year of War in Sudan](#)
3. [Navigating Challenges in Humanitarian Action: The Example of the Eastern Mediterranean Region](#)
4. [One Health in Action: Navigating Challenges and Opportunities in the Eastern Mediterranean](#)
5. [Eastern Mediterranean Region from Crisis to Solutions](#)
6. [Revealing Global Prioritization Exercise Humanitarian Research and Innovation in the West Asia and North Africa Region](#)
7. [Championing Global Environmental Public Health: Safeguarding Wellness for All, Every Day](#)

800+ attendees

2 policy briefs developed based on webinar content

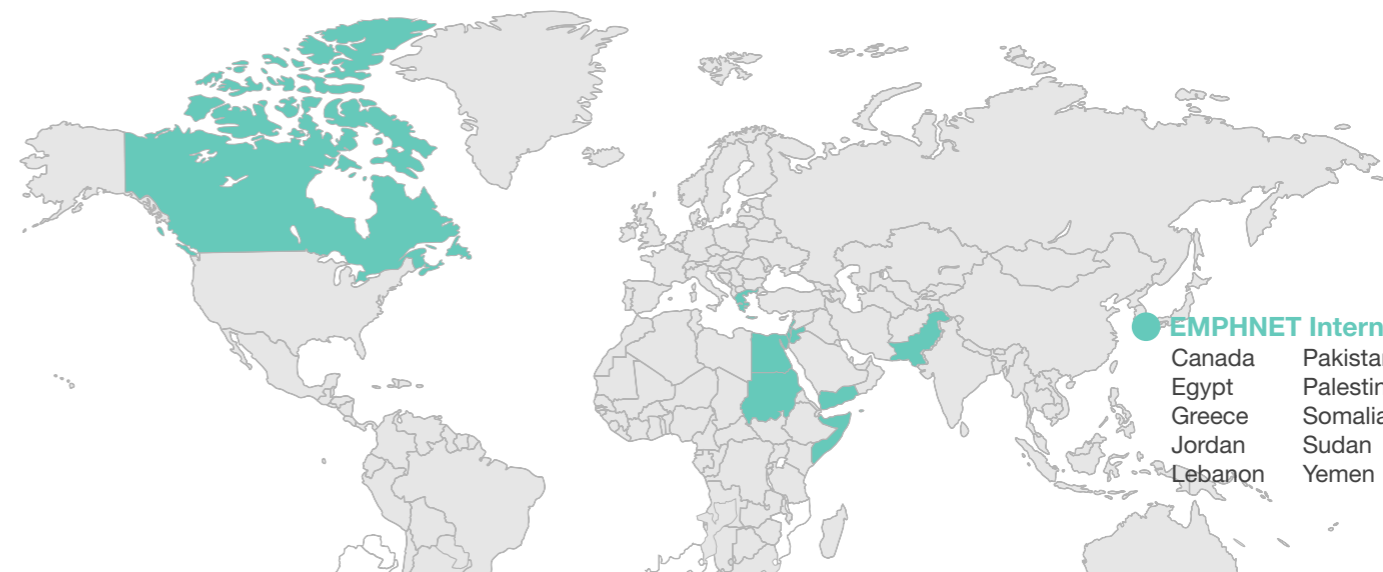
Engage Internship Program

Officially accredited by Agency for Public Health Education Accreditation (APHEA)

5 manuscripts developed by interns for publication

A total of **24 interns** successfully completed their internship programs

2 interns hired





ADAPTING IMMUNIZATION INITIATIVES TO CHALLENGING SETTINGS

In light of the ongoing and emerging challenges facing Expanded Programs on Immunization (EPIs) in the EMR, EMPHNET intensified its efforts to support these programs, aiming to drive progress toward polio eradication and the elimination of vaccine-preventable diseases (VPDs). Over the past year, EMPHNET placed particular emphasis on EPI workforce development, focusing on enhancing their knowledge and skills. This included training in immunization microplanning strategies designed to reach hard-to-access communities, such as those in security-compromised zones,

refugee camps, and Internally Displaced Person (IDP) camps.

Additionally, the organization has actively engaged communities in VPD surveillance and promoted greater community involvement to address vaccine-related rumors and misconceptions. By connecting various stakeholders, EMPHNET facilitated partnerships that support evidence-based decision-making, research generation, and the exchange of best practices.



Somalia @EMPHNET

ACCESSING HARD-TO-REACH COMMUNITIES

Using Microplanning to Expand Immunization Coverage

Somalia

Gedo Region

→ **Target Population** Nomadic Populations

→ **Achievements**

- Social mobilization in nomadic settlements involved community health volunteers (CHVs) and community members (CM) conducting door-to-door visits to educate the community on immunization and health-seeking behaviors
- **30** CHVs recruited
- **60** CMs (**32** Males and **28** Females) have been reached with important messages on immunization, surveillance, and reporting
- **80** nomadic households visited for active case finding
- Reaching **10,344** people (**5,713** Females and **4,631** Males)
- Conducting **4** integrated outreach sessions in Belet-hawa, Elwak, Dollow, and Bardere districts, vaccinating **68** children, including **28** zero-dose children with all antigens
- Supported **4** community dialogue sessions at Bardere, Belet-hawa, Dollow, and Elwak districts

Jubaland and Galmudug

→ **Target Population** Settled Communities in Somalia at state, regional, district levels

→ **Achievements**

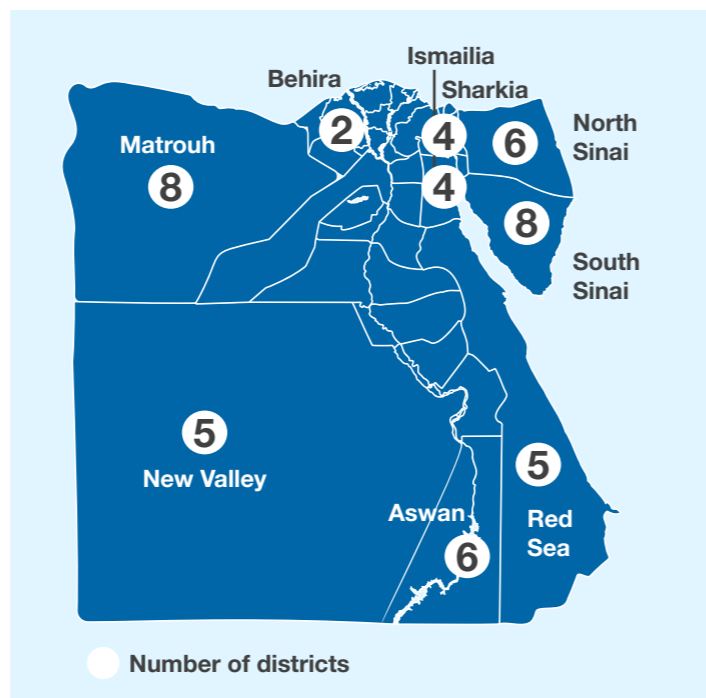
- **25** EPI officers trained, and all targeted **8** health facilities were assessed in **4** districts



SUPPORTING IMMUNIZATION OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Egypt

EMPHNET supported the Ministry of Health and Population in building technical and logistic capacities needed to conduct outreach vaccination sessions across 48 districts in nine governorates of Egypt. These efforts aimed to strengthen routine immunization coverage, enhance disease surveillance, and promote vaccine awareness in hard-to-reach areas, particularly among vulnerable populations, including displaced Sudanese individuals and nomadic groups. While this collaboration centered on implementation by health workers and vaccinators through ongoing training, it also engaged communities, especially local leaders, to inform interventions with community insights.



MOBILE COMMUNITIES UNDERSTANDING IMMIGRATION PATTERNS AND VACCINATION BARRIERS IN MOBILE COMMUNITIES IN AFGHANISTAN

This is a qualitative study implemented to understand the challenges related to accessing health services, particularly vaccination activities, among transitory communities. The goal is to ensure that these often-overlooked populations are effectively included in vaccination efforts. The study is being conducted by EMPHNET, the Opinion Research Center of Afghanistan, and US CDC. The findings will be valuable for national stakeholders responsible for planning and implementing vaccination programs. By identifying challenges and barriers to reaching mobile and migrant populations, this research can improve current vaccination strategies.



HIGHLIGHTS RESEARCH METHODS ADOPTED

Key Informant Interviews

1. National level – staff from international multilateral and bilateral organizations
2. Regional level /Provincial EPI/polio officers
3. District level – health care workers

Focus Group Discussions

1. District level – community health workers, community leaders
2. Community level – nomads, returnees, refugees, IDPs, and people who move for work, and healthcare workers





EMPOWERING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In the context of the region, EMPHNET recognizes the pivotal role of empowered communities, particularly women, in enhancing the quality, coverage, and equity of routine immunization. It also acknowledges prevailing existing challenges related to community engagement, refusal, and vaccine hesitancy. To address these challenges, EMPHNET worked with ministries of health to consolidate community engagement and enhance vaccination acceptance in high-risk districts and among vulnerable communities.

KEY RESULTS

- Pakistan**
- Engaging mothers** in community-owned efforts toward overcoming vaccine refusal and hesitancy
- 50** awareness sessions for community engagement conducted in Karak district
- 20** Lady Health Workers from each union council engaged to support the sessions
- A celebration event was held, with awards given to mothers from nine councils



Pakistan @EMPHNET



Sudan @EMPHNET

KEY RESULTS

- Sudan**
- 233** community members trained
- 159** community groups supervised
- 10** localities targeted: East Darfur, Central Darfur, River Nile, Northern State, Kassala, Gadarif, Blue Nile, Sinnar, West Nile, Red Sea

POLIO VILLAGE VOLUNTEERS IN YEMEN

In an initiative led by the Yemen Ministry of Public Health and Population (MoPHP), with support from EMPHNET, communities have been mobilized to support the national immunization program, to control the spread of communicable diseases, mainly polio amongst other VPDs. Through the Polio Village Volunteers (PVV) project, the MOPHP and EMPHNET engaged communities in the detection and reporting of acute flaccid paralysis and VPDs, as well as in advocacy efforts to raise awareness among caregivers on the importance of vaccinations. This year, volunteers were able to report on cases that might have been otherwise missed by traditional surveillance.

- 580+** Community Volunteers
- 2000+** cases reported, encompassing suspected measles, suspected neonatal tetanus, and acute flaccid paralysis



VPDs Booklet for Community Health Volunteers launched by Yemen MoPHP and EMPHNET

COMMUNITY-BASED SURVEILLANCE FOR EXPANDED PROGRAM ON IMMUNIZATION

EMPHNET is also utilizing a community-based surveillance (CBS) approach within the context of Sudan, where trained volunteers play a critical role in sustaining immunization activities. This approach is particularly significant given the disruptions that have impacted routine immunization services as a result of the ongoing conflict in the country.



EPI WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

EMPHNET supported the maintenance of immunization services by specifically assisting national entities in workforce development initiatives tailored to address the unique demands of emergency settings.

KEY RESULTS

Afghanistan

Launching Public Health Empowerment Program-Provincial EOC (PHEP-PEO)

30
Number of Participants

1
Number of Cohorts

Topics
Assessing the performance and equipment, performing routine immunization data quality audits, and reviewing surveillance data in relevant provinces

Methodology
Didactic training and fieldwork

Expected Support
Event surveillance, outbreak detection, investigation, and response

Sudan

Activating the Public Health Empowerment Program-Surveillance for Polio Officers (PHEP-SPO)

Participants
Polio surveillance officers

Focus
Auditing and reviewing routine immunization data, active case finding, supportive supervision, and community mobilization

Outcome
2 cohorts in Sudan



Sudan @EMPHNET

MAINTAINING CONTINUITY OF CARE AMID CONFLICT IN SUDAN

EMPHNET is committed to maintaining continuity of care in emergency settings across the EMR, with a particular focus on ensuring the equity, accessibility, and uninterrupted delivery of routine immunization services in priority countries. This year in Sudan, EMPHNET's efforts centered on building the capacities of the EPI workforce, enhancing community engagement, and strengthening acute flaccid paralysis surveillance to enable timely detection and response.

OTHER INITIATIVES

Increasing Vaccine Demand through Communication

→ With the engagement of stakeholders, efforts are ongoing to develop and operationalize a creative EPI communication strategy to increase public access to information and to promote vaccine uptake across all stages of life.

Enhancing Coordination for Improved Decision Making

→ Assisting in creating a web-based coordination platform to ensure strengthened coordination within the immunization program for transparent, equitable, and timely decision-making.

→ Supporting National Immunization Technical Advisory Group (NITAG) involvement through capacity building and structured guidelines for NITAG functionality.

Reviewing EPI Activities

→ Co-organizing a national review meeting for the EPI to assess the progress in reaching children with vaccinations in the current challenging context.

→ Working with the EPI to update the immunization plan for Q3 2024 and ensure results-based micro-planning that aligns with overall goals.

PARTNERSHIPS FOR IMMUNIZATION: A UNIFIED FRONT AGAINST PERTUSSIS

By fostering collaboration with ministries of health, global health organizations, and other key stakeholders, EMPHNET has been addressing barriers to vaccination, improving service delivery, and supporting capacity-building initiatives that contribute to achieving equitable immunization coverage. A recent example of this was an initiative launched to foster a regional collaboration and consultancy platform to address pertussis in the region. It is a multi-country partnership working to advance understanding of pertussis epidemiology, surveillance efforts, disease burden data, and control strategies, with a particular emphasis on maternal immunization to protect young infants.



STRENGTHENING BIORISK MANAGEMENT FOR HEALTH SECURITY

EMPHNET continued its capacity building efforts by implementing courses and training workshops aimed at empowering laboratory personnel in biosafety and biosecurity best practices. These efforts emphasized practical applications and fostered continuous learning through refresher courses. Building on its experience, EMPHNET also expanded these efforts to countries beyond the borders of the EMR, with a

particular focus on regions in need. Accompanying this investment in workforce development and laboratory infrastructure was EMPHNET's promotion of inter-country and multi-country coordination to address diverse biorisks. This included knowledge transfer, resource sharing, and enhancing risk communication to mitigate transboundary threats.

STRENGTHENING BIORISK MANAGEMENT CAPACITIES

Workforce Development

WITHIN THE EMR



EMPHNET furthered its investments in laboratory workforce development to prevent the misuse or unsafe handling of weaponizable biological material in Iraqi laboratories. EMPHNET supported candidates from academic, health, and agricultural sectors in preparing for the **International Federation of Biosafety Associations (IFBA)** Professional Certification Exams in Biorisk Management and Biosecurity.

BEYOND THE EMR



Training of trainers to strengthen laboratory professionals' biosafety and biosecurity practices in public and private laboratories at the national and subnational levels in **Kyrgyzstan**.

ENHANCING DISEASE DETECTION

Establishing the Invasive Bacterial Disease Surveillance Network in Africa, Middle East, and Eurasia: Meningitis and Septicemia Mapping Network (MenMap)

EMPHNET in collaboration with Sanofi spearheaded the establishment of the Meningitis and Septicemia Mapping Network (MenMap). This regional network aims to bolster the understanding and management of vaccine-preventable Invasive Bacterial Diseases (IBDs) in the Middle East, North Africa, and Eurasia.

KEY RESULTS



MenMap Contributions

- Fostering collaboration among research partners to enable knowledge sharing and improve the understanding of disease epidemiology and management.
- Allowing countries to compare their findings with each other and with regional trends, thereby contributing to a stronger foundation for evidence-based public health interventions.
- Using generated research to support decision makers in designing, developing, and implementing effective interventions.



Logistic Support for Enhanced Disease Detection

In collaboration with the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), EMPHNET launched a procurement initiative to supply Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) machines to enhance the capabilities of Central Public Health Laboratories in **5** countries. This initiative aimed to modernize laboratory infrastructure and support public health initiatives in the targeted countries.

The initiative involved the procurement and distribution of **12 PCR** to **Iraq, Lebanon, Pakistan, and Tunisia**, with efforts ongoing to finalize distribution to **Egypt**

Safeguarding Biosafety and Biosecurity: A Regional Consortium

Established with support from EMPHNET, this Network is dedicated to safeguarding the biosecurity and biosafety of public and private laboratories in North Africa. Its goal is to enhance awareness of risks and develop techniques mitigating biological risks associated with biological agents and toxins. This initiative will also focus on improving laboratory infrastructure and other forms of biological capacity-building assistance in **Libya, Tunisia, and Morocco**.

THE CONSORTIUM'S ACTIVITIES



Contributing to the development of more effective public health systems and biosafety/biosecurity measures in North African countries.



Building risk awareness and risk mitigation techniques in North Africa related to biological agents and toxins.



Reducing access to dangerous infectious agents and other materials of dual use.



Developing and establishing common protocols across partner countries and linking guidelines and capacities to international standards and frameworks, including development of Terms of Reference.

TURNING ONE HEALTH VISION INTO ACTION


Building on its prior experience and guided by its One Health Operational Framework, EMPHNET prioritized competency-based training and accelerated community engagement in relevant disease control and prevention. Efforts this year also emphasized enhancing coordination, particularly in strengthening disease surveillance systems, to improve the detection of diseases and gain a more comprehensive understanding of disease profiles.

INCREASING CAPACITIES FOR DETECTION

Environmental Surveillance for *Burkholderia pseudomallei* in Bangladesh

In a recent collaboration with Bangladesh under the One Health banner, EMPHNET has launched a one-year project to establish a robust environmental surveillance system for the detection of *Burkholderia pseudomallei*. Currently, there is no national surveillance program for environmental samples, making it crucial to detect *B. pseudomallei* in soil to identify environmental sources and assess exposure risks. The data collected will be analyzed to produce a detailed report, which will serve as a valuable resource for stakeholders, policymakers, and field workers. This initiative aimed to raise awareness about *Burkholderia pseudomallei* and its implications in Bangladesh, to ultimately support evidence-based actions to mitigate the risks associated with melioidosis, the disease caused by this bacteria and which has been endemic in the country since 1988.

HIGHLIGHTS

 A total of **1365** samples collected and tested from **12 districts**: Tangail, Gazipur, Manikganj, Kishorgonj, Sherpur, Gopalganj, Pabna, Feni, Chattogram, Cox's bazar, Cumilla and Brahmanbaria

Findings

- One soil sample from the Kishoreganj district tested positive using conventional PCR
- No soil or water samples tested positive in RT-PCR

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN THE CONTROL OF NEGLECTED TROPICAL DISEASES

In 2021, EMPHNET supported Yemen's national efforts by working with the MoPHP to conduct a round of Mass Drug Administration of Ivermectin aimed at eliminating onchocerciasis in endemic districts across eight governorates through a house-to-house campaign. Building on this initiative, EMPHNET introduced a new strategy this year that emphasized community engagement to distribute Ivermectin through health facilities in targeted districts. Female community volunteers were trained to visit and mobilize eligible populations to receive treatment at the nearest health facilities.

To assess the effectiveness of community engagement, particularly among female participants, an external evaluation was conducted by the Real Advisory Network. The evaluation findings underscored the need to ensure ongoing education and address accessibility limitations.

FIGURES

	Targeted	Reached	Completion
Governorates	8	8	100%
Districts	41	35	85%
Villages	9,125	7,694	84%
Trained Female Health Volunteers	1,000	1,000	100%
Eligible Population	1,065,203 visited by female volunteers	875,206 received treatment in health facilities	82%



193,586 households visited by female community volunteers



209,261 referral cards distributed



2,230,473 administered tablets



340 health facilities accredited for treatment



Bangladesh @EMPHNET



BUILDING ONE HEALTH CAPACITIES



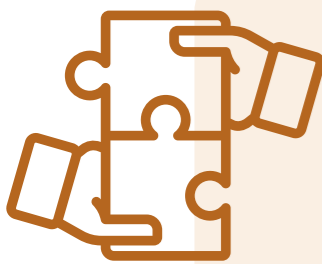
Established a high-level expert committee to develop the **“Regional Curriculum Framework for One Health Professional Training Program.”**

- Offering a comprehensive 9-month curriculum, which can be adapted into shorter formats of six or three months and specialized short courses



The Integration of One Health into Field Epidemiology Training Programs (FETPs)

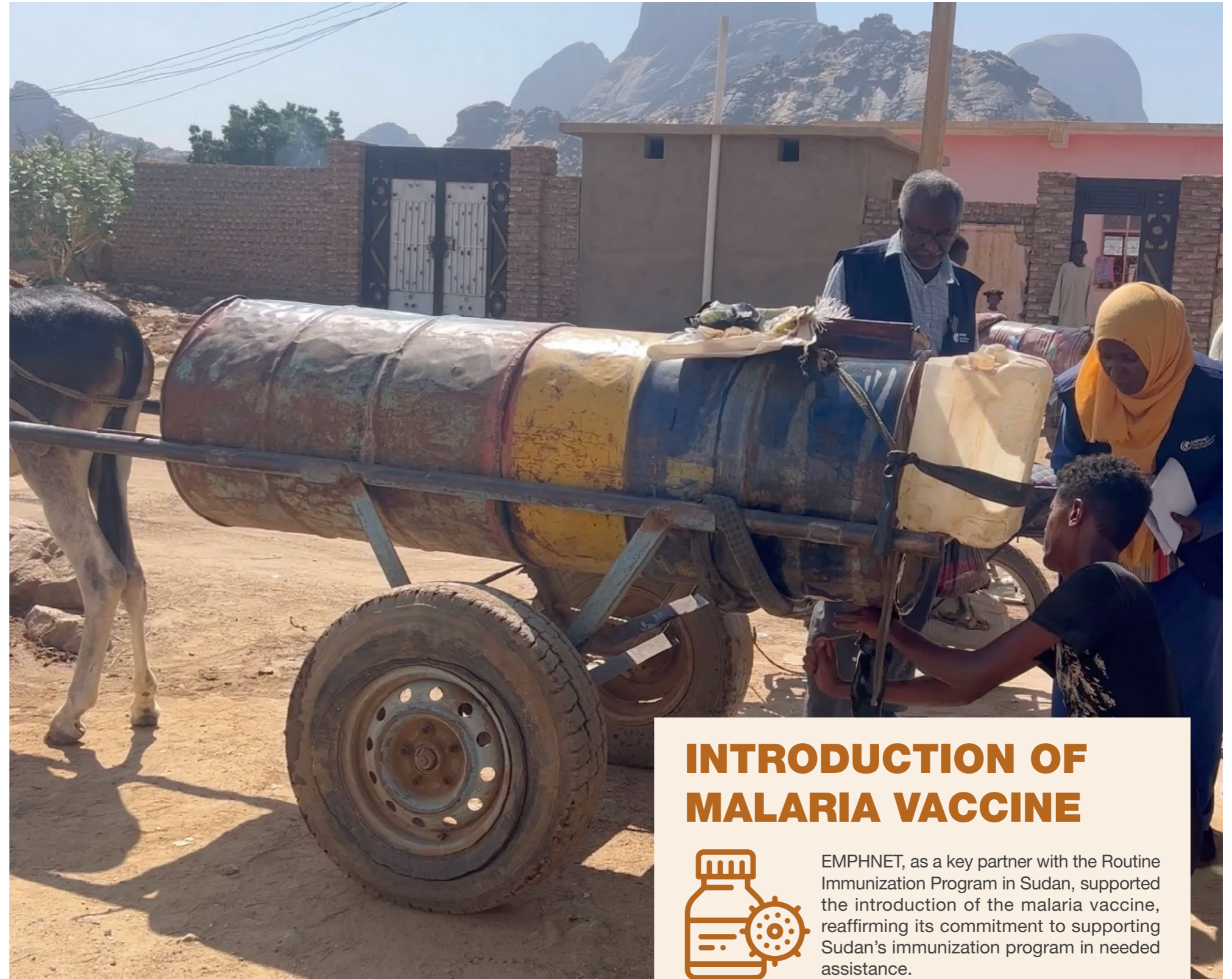
- Incorporating One Health concepts into FETP curricula
- Creating unique One Health training modules like the One Health FETP in Egypt



Fostering One Health Synergies and Coordination

- Enhancing coordination and collaboration among the three FETPs in Bangladesh—Advanced FETP, Intermediate FETP, and FETPV—further promoting a One Health Community of Practice
- Contributing to reviewing the Competencies for the One Health Field Epidemiology (COHFE) Framework

Capacity building is a core component of EMPHNET’s strategy to implement the One Health approach in the EMR.



INTRODUCTION OF MALARIA VACCINE



EMPHNET, as a key partner with the Routine Immunization Program in Sudan, supported the introduction of the malaria vaccine, reaffirming its commitment to supporting Sudan’s immunization program in needed assistance.

Sudan @EMPHNET



TACKLING NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CHALLENGES

EMPHNET maintained its focus on highlighting the urgent need for effective NCD interventions, particularly as recent estimates project NCDs to account for 80% of all regional deaths in the coming years. The organization placed particular emphasis on enhancing stakeholder engagement and generating research to provide both the evidence base and platforms for discussion.

USING EVIDENCE TO INFORM NCD STRATEGIES, PROGRAMS, AND INTERVENTIONS

Multi-Sectoral Collaborations for a Data-Driven Approach to Tobacco Control

EMPHNET focused on warning about the dangers of tobacco by leading the United Against Tobacco and COVID (UATC) campaign in the region. In 2022, EMPHNET joined forces with the US CDC and Vital Strategies to launch the UATC campaign in Jordan, Egypt, Iraq, and Palestine to address the harms of tobacco consumption and promote smoking cessation amidst the pandemic. This year, the campaign progressed in Jordan and Palestine to combat secondhand smoke, especially among children and advocate for smoke-free policies.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT: A CLOSE-UP

EMPHNET maintains its dedication to engaging all stakeholders in sharing ideas, exploring collaborations, and exchanging experiences to develop informed recommendations. Such an effort took place during the Eighth EMPHNET Regional Conference, where the roundtable “Collaborative Strategies for Implementing NCD ‘Best Buys’ in the Eastern Mediterranean and Africa: Addressing Challenges, Creating Opportunities, and Charting the Way Forward” gathered regional and global experts. These experts examined successful efforts in NCD prevention, identified barriers to implementation, and highlighted opportunities for collaboration.

IMPACT OF UATC CAMPAIGN

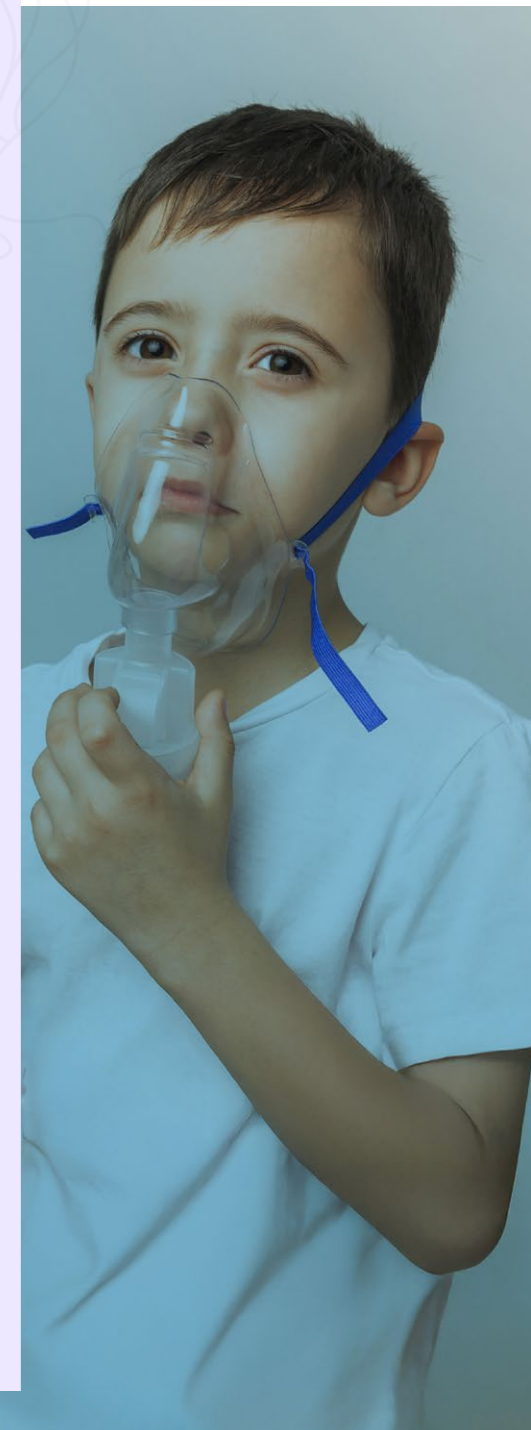
- ~50 million** people reached in 2022
- 9 million** additional individuals reached in Palestine and Jordan through social media in 2023
- Significant increases in public and policymakers’ support for **smoke-free** policies and visits to smoking cessation services noted.
- Positive shifts in public attitudes toward **tobacco control**

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE ROUNDTABLE

- Strengthen multi-sectoral collaboration
- Tailor interventions to local contexts
- Enhance political commitment and advocacy
- Secure sustainable financing
- Focus on workforce development
- Leverage the COVID-19 experience
- Address the mental health and environmental dimensions of NCDs

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- Hosting Experts from Vital Strategies to discuss **anti-tobacco campaign** design, strategy, message development, and dissemination for **effective media campaigns**.
- Hosting Tobacco: The Epidemic, the Industry and Importance of Media webinar, which was part of EMPHNET’s monthly **WEBi** series.
- Partnering with the Tobacco Control Research Group at the University of Bath, Vital Strategies, and Blueprint for Free Speech to enhance the **capacity of academic institutions and NGOs** in the EMR to **effectively monitor the activities and influence of the tobacco industry**.
- Became members of the **Global Alliance for Tobacco Control (GATC)**.
- Invited to be authors on the **2024 Tobacco Interference Index Report for Jordan**.



United Against Tobacco Campaign



Jordan @EMPHNET



BUILDING RESEARCHERS' CAPACITIES IN IMPLEMENTATION AND OPERATIONAL RESEARCH FOR NCDs

EMPHNET's NCD Research and Prevention Center (NCDsRC) launched the EMR Operational and Implementation Research Studies Mini-Grants initiative. Co-funded by EMPHNET and TEPHINET, with technical support from WHO-EMRO and the US CDC, the initiative aimed to accelerate the use of scientific evidence in addressing NCD-related challenges. The mini-grants initiative focused on identifying barriers to implementing NCD programs, leveraging local knowledge to inform policy and strategy, and addressing the unique needs of vulnerable populations in conflict and displacement situations.

BUILDING ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITIES IN NCD IMPLEMENTATION RESEARCH

EMPHNET launched [Non-Communicable Disease Implementation Research Toolkit](#) and a corresponding freely accessible online training program. The comprehensive toolkit and self-paced online training offer a structured approach to implementation research, helping users understand essential concepts and frameworks. It also emphasizes the role of contextual factors in shaping the success of NCD interventions.

FUNDED PROJECTS OVERVIEW: TACKLING NCDs ACROSS THE EMR

- 
Enhancing the Awareness of Policymakers About the NCD Tsunami in Afghanistan
 - **Recommendations** A multisectoral approach among ministries, including the ministries of health, education, and agriculture, to address key NCD risk factors through established focal points for future NCD interventions.
- 
Drug Adherence Among Patients with Hypertension and Diabetes in Bangladesh
 - **Recommendations** Improving drug availability, providing full prescription doses, and offering targeted health education for housewives to enhance adherence and healthcare outcomes in the region.
- 
Assessment of Lifestyle and Physical Activity Among University Students in Babylon Province, Iraq
 - **Recommendations** Tailored health programs based on college type and individual needs to promote physical activity, support anti-smoking campaigns, promote healthier eating habits, better sleep hygiene, and responsible alcohol consumption.
- 
Cigarette Smoking and Its Associated Factors Among Students at Babylon University, Iraq
 - **Recommendations** Implementing comprehensive educational programs to raise awareness about the health risks of smoking, particularly targeting younger students and adolescents to prevent smoking initiation.
- 
The Digital Landscape of Non-Communicable Disease Management in Jordan
 - **Recommendations** Improving access to digital health tools, expanding digital literacy programs, and addressing socioeconomic barriers to ensure that digital health innovations reach all segments of the population.
- 
Using a Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research to identify and address barriers to the implementation of NCD programs in Somalia: an exploratory qualitative and desk review report
 - **Recommendations** Focusing on context-specific strategies such as localizing NCD interventions and engaging local communities in their design and implementation.
- 
Improving Hypertension Management in Afghanistan: A Small-Scale Intervention Using WhatsApp for Hypertension Education and Follow-up
 - **Recommendations** The study concluded that WhatsApp is a promising, low-cost tool for health education in low-resource settings and recommends further research on mobile health (mHealth) interventions for managing chronic diseases.
- 
Strengthening Post-Partum Mental Health: Integration of Mental Health Assessment Screening Tool in Routine Post-Natal Care
 - **Recommendations** Incorporating the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS) into routine Postnatal Care to ensure early detection and treatment of Postpartum depression and calling for policies that enhance mental health services accessibility and awareness among healthcare providers and postpartum women.



ADOPTING A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO WOMEN'S AND CHILD HEALTH

EMPHNET has made substantial investments over the years to enhance maternal and child health services, alongside its broader efforts to strengthen health systems. This year, the organization continued to address major health challenges related to women's and children's health, including the persistently high neonatal mortality rates in the region, issues affecting adolescent health, and the stigma surrounding cervical cancer.

CHILD HEALTH

Neonatal Death Audits among Syrians from Zaatari and Azraq Refugee Camps in Jordan


Supported by the Gates Foundation, the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) started a special project to improve neonatal care by implementing low-cost interventions in Jordan, Kenya, and South Sudan. In Jordan, EMPHNET is supporting the UNHCR in conducting neonatal mortality audits in two refugee camps: Azraq and Zaatari. For the ninth consecutive year, EMPHNET is evaluating neonatal deaths among Syrian refugees to systematically capture information on the number and causes of these deaths, as well as the potential avoidable factors linked to them.

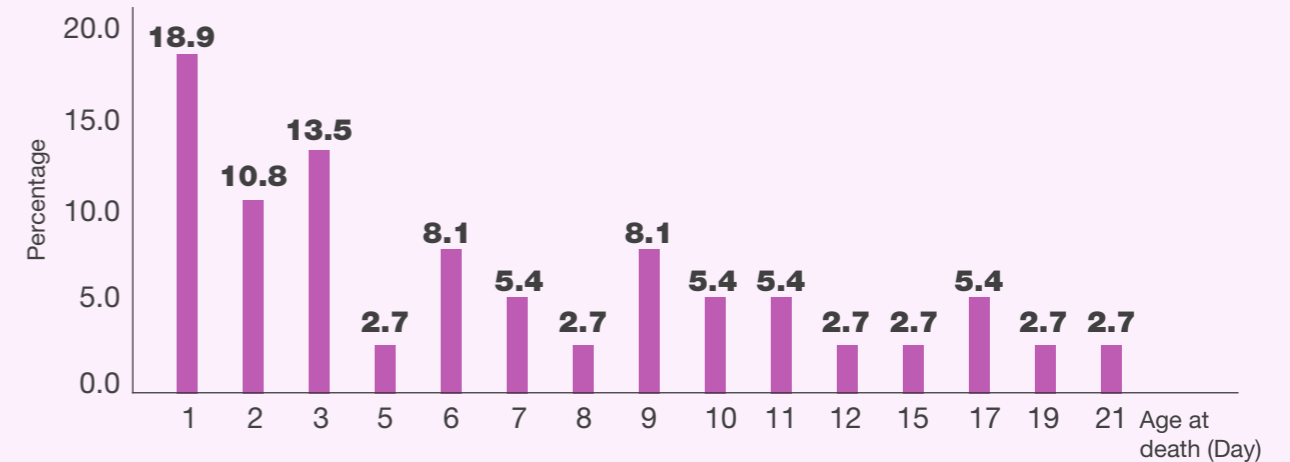
These audits are conducted in a no-blame, interdisciplinary environment, aiming to investigate possible causes of death and the factors affecting the coverage and quality of baby care. The insights gained provide recommendations for improving neonatal care in refugee camps by prioritizing actions to save the lives of babies.




Zaatari @EMPHNET


HIGHLIGHTS

 The distribution of 37 neonatal deaths in 2023 according to age at death (day)




 Delays contributing to neonatal deaths and stillbirths


- Delays related to recognition of danger signs and decision to seek care
- Delays related to receiving adequate and quality care at the health facility


 Recommendations have been released to address the identified factors contributing to neonatal deaths and delays in seeking care

- Implement community-based interventions to generate and sustain the community's interest in the services offered by the healthcare delivery system and to improve their health-seeking behaviors
- Invest in capacity building programs for health care providers in refugee camps
- Strengthen partnership and collaboration among healthcare providers, NGOs, and community representatives

 Support to Children and Mothers in Zaatari Camp

The EMPHNET Vaccination Center at Zaatari Refugee Camp plays a vital role in safeguarding the health of children by adhering to Jordan's national immunization schedule. The center also serves as a key hub for collaboration with international organizations, fostering strong partnerships and joint efforts to address health challenges within the refugee community. In addition to vaccinating children, the center provides essential immunizations for women of childbearing age, including tetanus, and offers rabies vaccinations as part of its preventive care protocols.

 **8415** children vaccinated in 2023

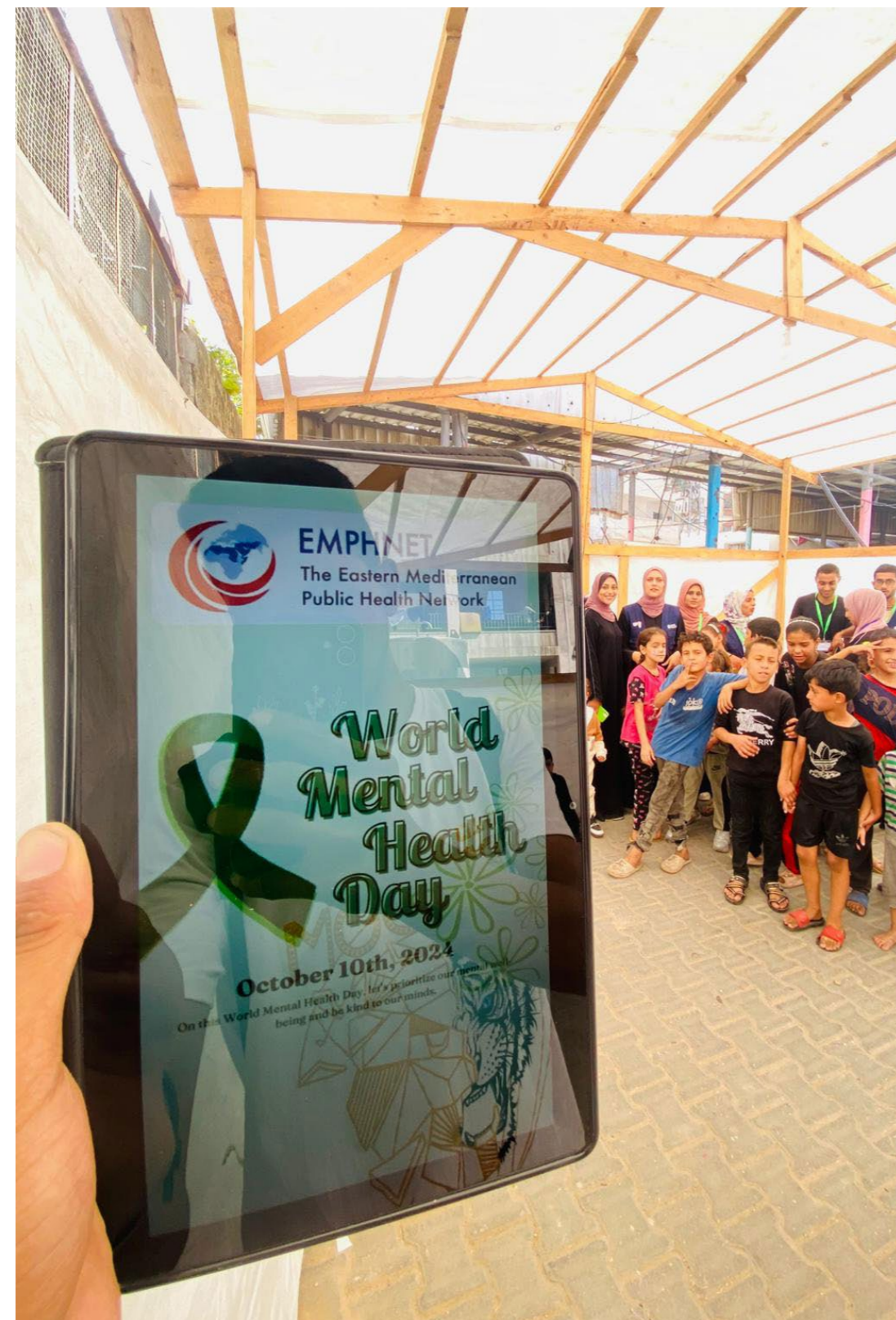
 **1519** women of childbearing age vaccinated with the tetanus vaccine in 2023

 **266** refugees in Zaatari camp received prophylactic rabies vaccinations



ADOLESCENT HEALTH

EMPHNET continued to work collaboratively to address major health challenges affecting adolescents, especially within vulnerable populations such as refugees. This year, the organization prioritized researching mental health, building on its previous work in this area to support adolescents in overcoming barriers to mental well-being, particularly in settings where access to resources is limited.



HIGHLIGHTS

Study: Provision of Psychosocial Support to Students in Jordan: Teachers' Knowledge, Attitudes, Skills, Practices, & Perceived Barriers

Targeting **549** teachers working in public, private, UNRWA, and Zaatari camp schools, as well as non-formal education centers

Findings

25.2% have ever received mental health training

25.2% agreed on feeling nervous in discussing students' psychosocial problems

Least enacted practice was systematic engagement with parents, school administration, and other community resources in students' well-being (**sometimes, 31.6%; rarely, 20.4%**)

Main barriers included parents' misunderstanding of teachers' role (**56.8%**), lack of integration of psychosocial support in the curriculum (**55.6%**), and challenges in identifying students with psychosocial problems due to large class sizes (**54.3%**)

Recommendations

Establishing an **evidence-based curriculum for psychosocial support**

Establishing a **guide for the provision of psychosocial support**

Conducting **continuous relevant training for school personnel and teachers**

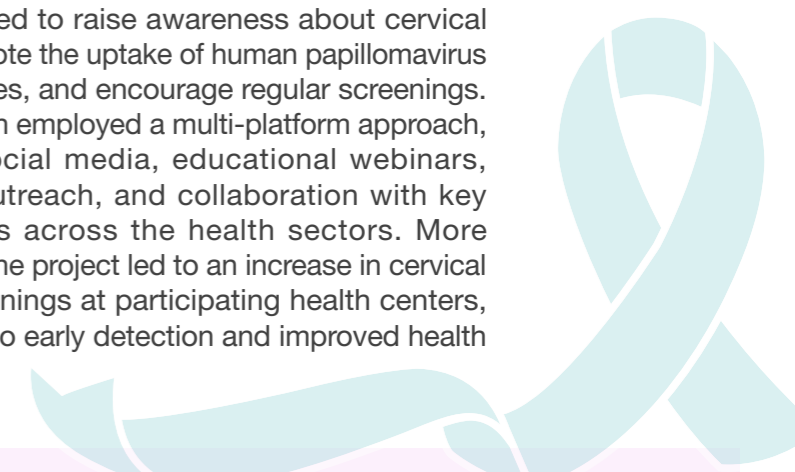
Ensuring presence of **appropriate space for relevant activities**

Considering the **individual needs of each school** when introducing relevant interventions

WOMEN'S HEALTH

Leveraging Experience to Combat Cervical Cancer Regionally

As part of its strategy to address modifiable NCD risk factors, EMPHNET launched a comprehensive awareness and prevention campaign against cervical cancer, focusing on public education, advocacy, and community engagement. This initiative aimed to raise awareness about cervical cancer, promote the uptake of human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccines, and encourage regular screenings. The campaign employed a multi-platform approach, including social media, educational webinars, university outreach, and collaboration with key stakeholders across the health sectors. More importantly, the project led to an increase in cervical cancer screenings at participating health centers, contributing to early detection and improved health outcomes.



STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

From this experience, EMPHNET is amplifying stakeholder engagement to explore further collaborations and initiatives to control the disease.

Regional Level

Organizing related coordination meetings alongside other stakeholders including health professionals from the private sector, experts from academia, specialists from NGOs, the media, and organizations working towards the empowerment of women, as well as health influencers and thought leaders

Participating in the MENA HPV Forum 2024, as a member of the MENA Coalition for the Elimination of HPV, to share EMPHNET's experience in efforts towards HPV elimination

Country Level: Jordan

Organizing the conference **"United Against Cervical Cancer: Defining Roles to Begin Action"** in Amman, Jordan



PARTNERSHIPS AND INTERNATIONAL PRESCENCE

NEW MEMBERSHIPS

- **WHO Eastern Mediterranean Regional Committee**
Granted the status of “non-member state actor and observer” within the World Health Organization (WHO) Eastern Mediterranean Regional Committee to actively participate in the committee’s high-level discussions, while contributing to the development of health policies pertaining to the region
- **The Pandemic Action Network (PAN)**
Joined PAN’s alliance of 350+ international multi-sector organizations to enhance global preparedness to prevent future pandemics and to mobilize political support for COVID-19 response, pandemic preparedness, and prevention measures
- **AMR Multi-Stakeholder Partnership Platform**
Became a member of the AMR Multi-Stakeholder Partnership Platform to foster collaboration among stakeholders across all aspects of the One Health approach
- **Global Alliance for Tobacco Control Community**
Became a network member at The Global Alliance for Tobacco Control (GATC) community, the only global network dedicated solely to implementing the World Health Organization’s Framework Convention on Tobacco Control

NEW COLLABORATIONS

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOUS)

- Department of Livestock Services (DLS)/ Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock (MOFL) - Bangladesh
- Royal Health Awareness Society - Jordan
- Ministry of Health and Human Service - Somalia
- Pak One Health Alliance (POHA)- Islamabad - Pakistan
- NIH - Pakistan
- Institute for Family Health (IFH) - Jordan
- Princess Sumaya University for Technology - Jordan
- The African Field Epidemiology Network (AFENET) - Uganda
- Juzoor for Health and Social Development - Palestine
- Robert Koch Institute - Germany
- King Hussein Cancer Foundation and Center - Jordan

PARTNERS AND COLLABORATORS

- American University of Beirut
- Baylor College
- Biosecurity Engagement Program/ Office of Cooperative Threat Reduction
- End Fund
- Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance
- Health Security Partners
- International Development Research Centre Canada
- Merck Sharp & Dohme IDEA GmbH (MSD)
- Opinion Research Center of Afghanistan (ORCA)
- RKI International
- Sanoufi Pasteur
- Save the Children
- Task Force for Global Health
- TEPHINET
- U.S. Department of State
- UNHCR
- University of Bath
- US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Vanderbilt University Medical Center
- Vision Corps Initiative
- Vital Strategies
- WHO
- WHO-EMRO

NOTABLE EXTERNAL PARTICIPATIONS

- **35th GOARN Steering Committee Meeting** - Kigali, Rwanda - Focusing on multi-sectoral approaches mainly the one Health approach in emergency response
- **77th World Health Assembly (WHA)** - Geneva, Switzerland - Engaging in discussions on the need for contextualized workforce development for enhanced emergency preparedness in the EMR and regions with similar profiles
- **Global Health Security Conference** - Sydney, Australia - Engaging in discussions with entities of similar missions
- **5th MENA Region Adolescent Health Conference** - Alexandria, Egypt - Co-organizing and moderating sessions on school health programs and enhancing roadmaps for adolescent health
- **Gavi Joint Appraisal for Pakistan, Sudan, and Yemen** - Cairo, Egypt - Engaging in discussions with entities of similar missions
- **Regional Consultation on EMR Health Workforce** - Cairo, Egypt - Engaging in stakeholder discussions and highlighting the need for contextualizing capacity building initiatives
- **Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS) Conference** - Atlanta, USA - Supporting FETP participants from the EMR
- **GHEC Design Group Meeting** - Montreux, Switzerland - Calling for a region-informed approach that focuses on aligning existing efforts from multiple stakeholders and for relying on well-informed and context-fit frameworks for collaboration and coordination
- **CDC-NIH/NIAID-MBRU Conference** - Abu Dhabi, UAE - Highlighting EMPHNET’s contribution to public health emergency management in the EMR
- **Africa Health ExCon 3rd Edition** - Cairo, Egypt - Underscoring context-based initiatives to addressing NCD epidemics and highlighting the relevance of One Health
- **World Health Summit** - Berlin, Germany - Participating in the GFEP Meeting and participating in a side meeting with RKI Germany on community-based approaches
- **National Workforce Capacity for Essential Public Health Functions: 4th Steering Committee** - Amman, Jordan. The event was co-hosted by EMPHNET and featured virtual participation by WHO Director General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus



MoUS SIGNED WITH IAPH

THE INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY OF PUBLIC HEALTH (IAPH)

- Building Foundation for Development - Yemen
- Institute for Family Health (IFH) - Jordan
- University of Birmingham - United Kingdom
- Mundiapolis University - Morocco
- Consultative Center for Science and Technology at Jordan
- University for Science and Technology - Jordan
- Field Medical Foundation - Yemen
- Rabat Collaborating Center - Morocco
- Aden German International University - Yemen
- Aden University of Science and Technology - Yemen
- Sustainable Development Foundation - Iraq
- National Company for Training and Employment - Jordan
- Ajloun National University - Jordan
- Al Al-Bayt University - Jordan
- Ibn Sina University for Medical Sciences - Jordan
- Isra University - Jordan

NEW OFFICES



EMPHNET marked the culmination of years of close collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Population in Egypt, as well as other prominent international organizations based in the country, with the opening of its office in Cairo, Egypt. The office's establishment provides geographic proximity to its partners at the national, regional, and international levels.



EMPHNET officially opened its office in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) with a celebratory event in Abu Dhabi as part of the organization's recent expansion of activities in the Gulf. This expansion provides EMPHNET with an opportunity to build on the experience gained in other regions and strengthen its support for the Gulf region's health initiatives.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AFP	Acute Flaccid Paralysis
AMR	Antimicrobial Resistance
CBS	Community-based Surveillance
CHVs	Community Health Volunteers
EBS	Event based Surveillance
EMR	Eastern Mediterranean Region
EPI	Expanded Program on Immunization
FETP	Field Epidemiology Training Program
GFEP	Global Field Epidemiology Partnership
IAPH	International Academy of Public Health
IDS	Integrated Disease Surveillance
IR	Implementation Research
NITAG	National Immunization Technical Advisory Groups
OR	Operations Research
PHC	Primary Healthcare
PHEP-SPO	Public Health Empowerment Program-Surveillance for Polio Officers
PVV	Polio Village Volunteer
RRT	Rapid Response Team
VPD	Vaccine Preventable Disease

WORKING TOGETHER FOR BETTER HEALTH.



EMPHNET

The Eastern Mediterranean
Public Health Network

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