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GHD|EMPHNET continues to monitor and focus on project activities throughout the year.

In this section, we include a compilation of updates, highlights, and insights of our work with partners.

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Feature

Rapid Response Teams: The EMR's Force Against Public Health Emergencies



The increasing frequency of natural and environmental disasters, along with public health emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic, highlights the critical importance of having public health **rapid response teams** (RRTs). These *public health workers have the potential to protect their communities against the region's **persisting** health emergencies. Countries are working together and with their partners from across the globe to empower rapid response teams whose role at the frontlines is key to detecting and containing any health emergency.*

Over the years, GHD|EMPHNET worked with countries and partners to improve preparedness for and response to public health emergencies. Since 2012, GHD|EMPHNET has been supporting the region's countries in building their **RRTs** through capacity-building, of national and regional scales, activities and through facilitating their mobilization in the field. GHD|EMPHNET joined the countries in equipping their RRTs with skills and knowledge in *disease surveillance, outbreak investigation, and emergency response.*

Throughout a decade, GHD|EMPHNET implemented this all-level training for over **1300** RRT members from Afghanistan, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Pakistan, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the UAE, and Yemen. Many of these responders were deployed to support investigations of major outbreaks: In our region: Yellow Fever in Sudan, Measles in Jordan, Cholera in Iraq, and others inside Syrian refugee camps. Outside the region: Ebola in West Africa and After Typhoon Yolanda in Philippines. They also played a major part in the response to COVID-19.

Together with the region and our partners, we stand in support of these rapid responders because we rely on their power to continue to protect us from health emergencies, those which are persistent or others that might emerge.



The Experts

Special Dedication to Our Ten-Year Collaborations in Egypt



Withstanding a host of public health emergencies, outbreak investigations, and challenges over the years, Egypt has recorded paramount achievements in improving and responding to public health emergencies and sustaining health system support to ensure the health and well-being of the Egyptian people. While trying to meet the rising demands and expectations of its population, Egypt has obtained significant and widespread benefits from expanding immunization coverage and implementing other basic public health measures.

To further support Egypt in their goals to address health priorities, GHD|EMPHNET worked with the Ministry of Health and Population (MOHP) in building workforce capacity in field epidemiology, rapid response, polio assets transitioning, and other priority areas within the public health system.

Workforce Development

Expanding Field Epidemiology Capacities

Since 2009, GHD|EMPHNET has been supporting Egypt's Field Epidemiology Training Program, an advanced program which was the second to be established in the Eastern Mediterranean Region. Support focused on creating Collaborating with the Ministry of Population and Health, GHD|EMPHNET supported

the establishment of two additional modalities within the program: the intermediate (one year) and the basic (three months and known as the Public Health Empowerment Program [PHEP]).

Egypt's FETP at a Glance

Cohorts	Establishment Year	Modalities
22	1993	Advanced
1 (completed) 1 (in progress)		Intermediate
6		Basic

Expanding Rapid Response Workforce Capacity

GHD|EMPHNET’s support for public health workforce development extended to include Rapid Response Teams (RRTs) training. GHD|EMPHNET supported the MOHP in conducting a series of RRT training workshops targeting health workers from governorates across Egypt. These RRT training workshops were important to strengthen the public health workforce capacity to effectively respond to outbreaks and other public health emergencies.

Bolstering the Performance of EPI Staff

GHD|EMPHNET placed a specific focus on building capacities of staff of the Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI) at the peripheral and frontline levels. Over a couple of years, GHD|EMPHNET worked with health authorities in Egypt in training **10,120** EPI staff at all levels on the implementation of RI activities.

COVID-19 Emergency Preparedness and Response

In Egypt and in collaboration with the African Field Epidemiology Network (AFENET), GHD|EMPHNET and the Ministry of Health and Population implemented a community contact tracing strategy in support of formal COVID-19 response. This was done through launching Partnership to Accelerate COVID-19 Testing (PACT) initiative in August 2020 by the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The PACT initiative aimed to strengthen capacity to test for COVID-19 across Africa with emphasis on countries that have only minimal capacity.



Polio Program Assets Transitioning

In 2017, GHD|EMPHNET initiated a Polio Program Assets Transitioning Project to utilize domestic Polio assets in strengthening RI and to reach the measles elimination targets in Egypt in three high priority frontiers governorates: Aswan, Matrouh, and Red Sea.

GHD|EMPHNET supported the Ministry of Health and Population in establishing the project’s structures at different levels of the national health system, in training health staff on detecting and reporting Acute Flaccid Paralysis (AFP) and measles as well as reporting unimmunized children while highlighting the roles and responsibilities of health staff and community volunteers to reach the objective of this project, and in supporting conduction of micro surveys around AFP and fever and rash cases, and in monitoring the project’s activities.



In Focus

Promoting Online Learning for Public Health in the Eastern Mediterranean Region



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In line with GHDIEMPHNET Strategy 2020-22, there was a [...More](#)



NEW

أثر مفهوم الجندر والأدوار الاجتماعية على قضايا الصحة الإنجابية والجنسية

أدرج مفهوم الصحة الجنسية والإنجابية بشكل عالمي [...More](#)



COVID-19

Rapid Response Teams for COVID-19

WHO has declared COVID-19 as a global pandemic in March [...More](#)

Online learning proves effective for those who have limited time, do not have enough resources, or are hindered by travel or social restrictions. This is especially the case for learners living in the Eastern Mediterranean Region where GHD|EMPHNET is investing in online learning for public health.

As part of the support it provides to Field Epidemiology Training Programs, known as F-E-T-Ps, in the Eastern Mediterranean, it created a blended training modality for these programs that integrates online learning with in-person training. So, now the 9-month intermediate FETP is available online and so is that of the three-month, basic FETP, known as the Public Health Empowerment Program.

Beyond field epidemiology, GHD|EMPHNET also designs and offers other online training programs and courses that address subjects of priority to the region. These have been included in its recently launched learning management system where learners are offered free, self-paced lessons and which has been gaining increasing popularity in the region.

And to expand its support for field epidemiologists, while welcoming other public

health professionals, it also launched a regional electronic library that provides comprehensive access to books, journals, and databases.

To promote indirect learning, in the form of knowledge exchange, GHD|EMPHNET is using its networking platform, EpiShares, to connect public health professionals, and its monthly webinars to maximize the dissemination of information. GHD|EMPHNET is also adapting networking events to online experiences to create more learning opportunities.

GHD|EMPHNET will continue to pioneer and support efforts in innovative online learning to ultimately benefit public health in the Eastern Mediterranean.

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Our Vision
is to enable people in the Eastern Mediterranean Region lead healthy lives and well-being.

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Projects

GHD|EMPHNET Conducts Two Training of Trainers Workshops on Vaccine Safety/AEFI in Iraq

Building the capacity of the Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI) in Iraq, and in line with the GHD|EMPHNET's strategic goal to strengthen performance of national EPI programs, the Iraqi Ministry of Health (MoH) held two Training of Trainers (ToT) workshops on vaccine safety and Adverse Events following Immunization (AEFI) surveillance system in September.

To strengthen vaccine safety and the AEFI surveillance system, the MoH, in cooperation with GHD|EMPHNET, conducted two ToT training workshops in Baghdad and Erbil for provincial EPI managers and technical AEFI surveillance officers.

The first workshop was held in Baghdad between 20-22 September 2022, while the second workshop was held in Erbil between 27-29 September 2022. A total of 72 participants were trained on the detection, reporting, investigation, and analysis of AEFI events.

The workshops covered topics such as EPI objectives, vaccine safety, AEFI surveillance; investigating AEFIs; and data entry and AEFI analysis plan.

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Afghanistan Conducts EPI Supportive Supervision Missions in Priority Provinces

As part of its strategic goal to ensure the delivery and sustainability of high-quality vaccination services and immunization programs in the EMR, GHD|EMPHNET supported Afghanistan in conducting supportive supervision missions to priority provinces.

During September, the Ministry of Public Health organized two missions in Logar and Wardak provinces, aiming to strengthen the immunization system at the sub-national level.



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Workshop to Review and Update the National Rapid Response Team Standard Operating Procedures in Egypt

The establishment and mobilization of Rapid Response Teams (RRTs) are vital to containing the harmful effects of public health emergencies, saving lives, and coordinating actions in vulnerable communities in the Eastern Mediterranean region (EMR). GHD|EMPHNET's extensive investment in RRTs over the past decade was leveraged recently to support EMR countries to fight against COVID-19 pandemic.

As part of its Public Health Emergency Management Center (PHEMC) strategic goal to strengthen the capacities of the EMR countries in emergency preparedness, response and recovery, GHD|EMPHNET, in coordination with the Egyptian Ministry of Health, conducted a five-day workshop in Cairo to support the development of the National Rapid Response Team Standard Operating Procedures (NRRT-SOPs), and adapt the SOPs to the context of Egypt.



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GHD|EMPHNET Holds Refresher Training of Trainers Workshop on AFP Surveillance in Morocco

With the aim of strengthening the surveillance of Acute Flaccid Paralysis (AFP) and Vaccine Preventable Diseases (VPDs) in Morocco, GHD|EMPHNET has been working with the Federal Ministry of Health (MoH) toward achieving this goal since 2017.

In cooperation with GHD|EMPHNET, the MoH conducted a two-day refresher training of trainers (ToT) workshop on AFP surveillance for central and regional focal points for VPDs surveillance to improve the quality of AFP surveillance, given the new case of circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus (cVDPV) in Algeria.

Held between August 1-2, 2022, in Rabat, the workshop focused on reinforcing the participants’ knowledge of AFP surveillance gained from previous training, and building a roster of master trainers, who will in turn provide training for surveillance officers at a subnational level.

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GHD|EMPHNET Supports Enhancing RRT Response to Polio and VPDs Outbreaks in Afghanistan

Stopping the ongoing wild poliovirus-1 (WPV-1) transmission in Afghanistan has encountered significant challenges, i.e., inaccessibility, sub-optimal campaign quality, refusals, cross-border population movement between the polio-endemic Afghanistan and Pakistan, low routine immunization coverage, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

To mitigate these risks, the Afghanistan Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) adapted its operations and adjusted the planning and implementation processes of the Polio Eradication Program.

Supported by GHD|EMPHNET, MoPH conducted a workshop titled “Enhance country polio and VPDs outbreak preparedness & response in Afghanistan” in the eastern, western, and northern regions, to better equip the Rapid Response Teams (RRT) with the right tools and knowledge to deal with polio and Vaccine-Preventable Diseases’ (VPDs) emergencies.

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Sample Management Inventory, Securitization, Consolidation, and Safe Handling Training Workshop for Libyan and Tunisian Scientists

Through collaborative efforts, GHD|EMPHNET aims to strengthen the country’s capacities in the detection of and response to emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases.

For this purpose, GHD|EMPHNET, in coordination with the Center for Global Health Science and Security at Georgetown University (CGHSS), have organized a workshop between September 20-22, 2022, in Tunisia.

The training aimed to assess the current situation of samples and pathogens management and inventory systems, implement an inventory system of pathogens across Libyan and Tunisian public and animal health laboratory facilities, track and consolidate dangerous pathogens, minimize the risk of misuse, and build a network of experts to further sustain the systems and advance efforts to secure pathogens regionally.



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Libya and Tunisia Conduct Workshop on Building Multi-sectoral and Cross-border Networks

GHD|EMPHNET and Center for Global Health Science and Security at Georgetown University (CGHSS) has been collaborating with partners in Libya and Tunisia to improve multisectoral and cross-border coordination for the surveillance, detection, and response to priority transboundary zoonotic diseases between September 20-22, 2022 in Tunisia.

Twenty participants from the National Center for Disease Control and National Center for Animal Health in Libya and Ministry of Health, National School of Veterinary Medicine of Sidi Thabet, Centre National de Veille Zoosanitaire and Directorate General of Veterinary Services in Tunisia met to implement One Health Systems Assessments for Priority Zoonoses, OH-SAPZ, a tool for cross-sectoral prioritization of zoonotic diseases, and mapping of systems for One Health coordination.



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Symposium Held on COVID-19 Experience in Jordan

Opportunities for fundamental change in the public health appeared from the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. Though the pandemic is by no means over, an increased understanding of prevention measures and reflection on lessons learned is being considered to address these challenges.

To this effect, EMPHNET held a two-day symposium under the patronage of H.E Dr. Bisher Al Khasawneh in Amman, Jordan titled “**COVID-19 Experience in Jordan: Realities, Challenges and Opportunities**” highlighting the immense health, economic and social challenges among communities.

Experiences, main challenges, and lessons discovered during the COVID-19 pandemic was shared through panel discussions to present Jordan’s practice and strengthen preparedness and response to future pandemics while also highlighting media’s role in times of health crisis.



With Partners

GHD|EMPHNET works with regional, national, and international networks to strengthen public health systems in the EMR.



EMPHNET Receives UN Interagency Task Force and the WHO Special Programme on Primary Health Care Award

The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3 includes target 3.4 to reduce premature NCD mortality by one-third by 2030. In recognition of achievements in strengthening provision of NCD services, EMPHNET was selected as a recipient of the 2022 UN Interagency Task Force and the WHO Special Programme on Primary Health Care Award.

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Exploring Opportunities of Work in Iraq with MSD

EMPHNET Iraq's office met with MSD to discuss extending collaboration and partnership to explore future opportunities of work in Iraq.





Dr. Mohannad was Awarded by the EurAsian Organization

On September 21, 2022, the Eurasian Peoples' Assembly held an event dedicated to the International Day of Peace.

Dr. Mohannad Al Nsour, EMPHNET's Executive Director, was honored by the Eurasian Organization on this occasion.

Sudan's Adoption of "High Burden to High Impact" Approach

On September 15, 2022, EMPHNET was honored at a press conference by the Federal Ministry of Health in Sudan for its effort in the "End of Circulating Vaccine Drive Polio Outbreak 2020" and for Sudan's adoption of "high burden to high impact" approach to boost malaria control efforts.



GHD|EMPHNET: Working together for better health

Global Health Development (GHD) is a regional initiative created to support countries in the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR) and to strengthen their health systems to respond to public health challenges and threats. GHD was initiated to advance the work of the Eastern Mediterranean Public Health Network (EMPHNET) by building coordinating mechanisms with Ministries of Health, International Organizations, and other institutions to improve population health outcomes. Serving as a collaborative platform, GHD|EMPHNET is dedicated to serving the region by supporting efforts to promote public health policies, strategic planning, sustainable financing, resource mobilization, public health programs, and other related services.

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