

Read in this issue:

- ◇ EMPHNET's Word
- ◇ Yemen FETP Conducted a Two Weeks Training
- ◇ EMPHNET conducted Board of Directors Meeting
- ◇ Fourth Health Result Conference in Kabul, 13-14 January, 2012
- ◇ Letter to the editor: How did EMPHNET Rapid response teams training help in Yellow fever outbreak containment in Sudan
- ◇ Egypt FETP graduated cohort fifteenth
- ◇ Scorecard Assessment of Egypt Field Epidemiology Training Program

EMPHNET's Word By: Dr. Mohannad Al Nsour, Executive Director

During my college days, our motto was "Think Ahead." This comes to my mind when issuing this newsletter which highlights our Board of Directors' meeting that took place in late January to develop a strategy that will drive EMPHNET ahead towards achieving its vision. As we develop our strategy, we create a pathway that will lead us towards achieving long term goals. We are thinking ahead for the next steps forward where we aspire to make our operation distinctive by creating new solutions for facing the many challenges that lie ahead. Therefore, we anticipate new directions that will help us in creating more opportunities for success and commitment for change.

Our Board of Directors meeting convened three discussion sessions to review EMPHNET's progress and identify strategic imperatives. Board

members and EMPHNET staff engaged in discussions on strategic issues in order to provide input to new strategic goals. Major strategic issues were defined by identifying the gap between the current situation and EMPHNET's vision and strategic goals. Strategic objectives were later developed to address these major issues both at the organizational level and delivery level as well. The initial strategic plan identified the following six major strategic directions for EMPHNET: organizational capacity and leadership; sustainability and growth; training and capacity building; research and development; networking and partnership; and system quality and accountability. During the coming quarter, EMPHNET will align its strategic plan along these directions in order to achieve and sustain a robust and resilient EMPHNET.

It's our strategy that determines our approach and not our preferences.....

Yemen FETP Conducted a Two Weeks Training

The current Yemen FETP Cohort participated in two weeks training in Sana'a Yemen, January 5th – 16th, 2013. The training was a collaborative effort of CDC and EMPHNET. In week one, the Yemen FETP residents learned advanced epidemiologic methods from Dr. Abdul Wahed Al-Serouri, from Sana'a University, Dr. Mohannad Al-Nsour, Executive Director of EMPHNET, and Dr. Lisa Bryde, from CDC, Atlanta.

In week two, the residents focused on working with Epi Info 7. Dr.



Manhal Halasa, an epidemiologist with WHO-Iraq provided his expertise and led the training, which provided the residents with the skills necessary to fully utilize Epi Info 7.

The Yemen FETP Cohort, which consists of twelve individuals from Yemen, is the first FETP Cohort to be trained and work in Yemen.



Board Members with EMPHNET Staff

EMPHNET conducted Board of Directors Meeting

Eastern Mediterranean Public Health Network (EMPHNET) conducted its 5th Board of Directors meeting in Hotel Kempinski Dead Sea, Jordan 27-29 January, 2013.

FETP Program Directors from Afghanistan, Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Pakistan and Yemen, and representative of Centers for Disease Control and Prevention attended the meeting.

The Board welcomed Dr. Nabeel Al Kahtani, Dr. Amgad Kholiyand Dr. Ibrahim Iblan who are newly appointed as FETP Program Director in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Jordan respectively, to the Board of Director and wished them success in their work.

In the same context, all board members expressed gratitude and appreciation for both Dr. Mohammad Al Mazrou, Saudi Arabia, and Dr. Iman Abdel Kareem, Egypt, for their efforts that contributed to the overall successes of EMPHNET over the tenure of their membership at the Board of Directors.

The Board voted for Prof. Abdurrahman Maaraufi, as Chair for the next tenure of two years, then handed over the responsibilities to Prof. Maaraufi and wished him success in undertaking his new position. Prof. Mauraufi is working as General Director of the National School of Public Health (formerly known as National Institute of Health Administration) in Morocco.

Dr. Mohannad AINSour, Executive Director of EMPHNET presented his annual report to the Board of Directors, which was well received, the Board thanked Dr. AINSour for his taintless and productive work at EMPHNET and highlighted on the new directions of EMPHNET in the current year and the coming annual plan of action.

The Board of Directors also worked with Dr. Ibrahim Aqel, an independent consultant, to develop the strategic plan of action for EMPHNET for the coming 5 years. The meeting was wrapped up after finalizing the next steps of EMPHNET plan of action for 2012-13.

Its worth mentioning that EMPHNET Board of Directors convenes on semi-annual bases. The objective is to evaluate the elapsed year's activities and achievements and draw plans for future ones.



SWOT Analysis Exercise



Part of the Meeting Discussions

Fourth Health Result Conference in Kabul, 13-14 January, 2012

Ministry of Public Health, in cooperation with other partners, conducts a result conference on the introduction of various new information and evidence for informed decisions making and policy development. Key objective of this initiative by the Ministry is to improve health sector governance in Afghanistan. The 4th Health Result Conference held in Kabul Serena Hotel from 13-14 January, 2012. The participants were difference stakeholders and presenters, such as Ministry of Public Health, other governmental sectors, National and International organizations, UN agencies and others. The Conference included presentation of 16 oral presentations and eight poster presentations.

The main goals and objectives of this year Conference included: 1) Cultivate Accountability through establishing mutual accountability between our partners and the MoPH, one mechanism to establish oversight and review processes, establish a formal consultation mechanism, and sustain a culture of integrity and openness that serves the public interest. 2) Engaging Stakeholders through: creating and maintaining a safe space for the sharing of ideas, elicit, and respond to, all forms of feedback (Health Results linked to Health Retreat), and establish alliances with other government ministries and civil society. 3) Establish a shared direction through: oversight on the process for developing and implementing a shared action plan, advocate on behalf of stakeholders' needs and concerns, and oversee the process of realization of the shared goals and the desired outcomes. 4) Strengthening effective stewardship of resources through: collection, analyses and use information and evidence for making decisions, build capacity to absorb resources and deliver quality services, and use resources in a way that maximizes the health and well-being of the public. *Cont'd on page 3*



Letter to the editor: How did EMPHNET Rapid response teams training help in Yellow fever outbreak containment in Sudan

By *Mohammed A Soghaier**, *Abdalla M Abdalla**, *Linda A Mustafa**

* *EMPHNET RRT members /Epidemiology Directorate – Sudan FMOH*

Dear editor,

By the first week of October 2012 the surveillance unit of the Directorate of Epidemiology and Zoonotic Disease within the Federal Ministry of Health – Sudan received a report from the Central Darfur state of seven cases from Nertiti locality, presented with sudden onset febrile disease in addition to hemorrhagic manifestations and jaundice in some of them. The event was reported as a suspicion of hemorrhagic fever disease. Epidemiology Directorate generated a rapid response team to conduct field outbreak investigation, verify the diagnosis and to assess the initial needs in the fragile newly made Central Darfur state.

The team visited the affected area and the surrounding villages, conducted the standard outbreak investigation steps including active case finding, serological surveys, entomological surveys in addition to the clinical and laboratory records revision. The collected blood samples were tested and the diagnosis of Yellow Fever outbreak was established. Sudan ministry of health with the support of all health sector partners immediately started large scale intervention plan. Interventions involved case management, vector control, health education and the specific mass vaccination campaigns in addition to the overall coordination and monitoring activities.

Eastern Mediterranean Public Health Network Rapid Response Teams (EMPHNET RST) members from Sudan were fully involved and contributed significantly in all activities that carried out to tackle the outbreak. The initial outbreak investigation team that sent to the affected area and collected the initial samples was led by an EMPHNET RST member (Dr. Soghaier), Mr. Abdalla worked as a field federal supervisor to support and strengthen the surveillance system, vector control activities and mass YF vaccination campaign in some affected areas and Dr. Linda had played a significant role in the field of case management by revising and adopting YF case treatment protocol and providing some required supplies.

Currently, by the mid of December 2012 Sudan FMOH in collaboration with WHO EMRO/HQ planned and conducted Yellow Fever risk assessment for all other remaining parts of the country. The risk assessment exercise is aimed to prioritize areas of high risk of developing YF outbreaks so as to plan and conduct mass preventive immunization campaigns and then include YF vaccine in the national schedule of EPI. Sudan FMOH had nominated one of EMPHNET RST members as the national YF risk assessment focal person. It is very important to highlight that the EMPHNET consultant and trainings facilitator (Dr Hayat Khogali) is the director of Sudan Epidemiology Directorate; she was the first responsible person coordinating and implementing overall outbreak detection and response activities.

EMPHNET RST training is believed to contribute in capacity building of its members including Sudan's ones. This training helped Sudan and its people in the affected areas by providing well trained and ready health cadres who took the responsibility and worked efficiently side by side with their other colleagues and widening the scope of preventing and controlling of the diseases by translating scientific workshops into practice, making us ready not only to contain the Yellow fever outbreak in Darfur, but in anywhere else.

Thanks .

Fourth Health Result Conference in Kabul, 13-14 January, 2012– *Cont'd*

Dr. Khwaja Mir Islam Saeed, who has graduated from Pakistan FELTP in 2011 and now working as a director for surveillance in Ministry of Public Health, had three presentations which were welcomed by all participants. His presentations were on Prevalence and risk factors of diabetes mellitus among Kabul citizens in 2012, Results of data analysis of Disease Early Warning System (DEWS) in Afghanistan from 2007-2012, and Outbreak of Brucellosis and Q fever in Afghanistan 2011-2012.

Egypt FETP graduated cohort fifteenth

The Eastern Mediterranean Regional Field Epidemiology and Training Programs (FETPs) celebrated another successful milestone when the fifteenth cohort of the Egypt FETP graduated seven residents on January 16, 2013. The residents, all officials from the Egyptian Ministry of Health and Population (MOHP), successfully completed the two-year training that focuses on building epidemiological skills in public health workers so they are better equipped to prevent, anticipate, and respond to disease outbreaks.

The graduation ceremony was held at the Air Defense House in Nasr City and hosted by The Egyptian Ministry of Health and Population in partnership with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, USA (CDC), the Eastern Mediterranean Public Health Network (EMPHNET), and the Training Programs in Epidemiology and Public Health Interventions Network (TEPHINET). Former graduates of Egypt's previous FETPs were also in attendance along with such distinguished officials as Dr. Amr Kandeel, Egypt's MOHP First Undersecretary; Dr. Abeer Barakat, Egypt's MOHP Minister's Assistant; Dr. Samir Rifaey, Director of Egypt's MOHP Epidemiology and Surveillance Unit; Dr. Naema Gasser, World Health Organization's (WHO) Representative in Egypt; Dr. Mohannad Nsour, Executive Director of the Eastern Mediterranean Public Health Network; Dr. Dionisio Herrera, Director of Training Programs in Epidemiology and Public Health Interventions Network; and Genessa Giorgi, CDC's Public Health Advisor and Manager for Middle East and North Africa FETPs.

Egypt's newly appointed FETP Coordinator, Dr. Amgad El-Kholy expressed great pride in the graduates of the fifteenth FETP cohort and the positive contributions he knows they will make towards improving health for the populations not only in Egypt, but also regionally and globally, for many years to come.

The Egypt FETP, one of the most established FETPs in the region since 1993, has produced over 100 trained field epidemiologists who have gone on to become public health leaders in Egypt. The Field Epidemiology and Training program in Egypt is led



From left to right: FETP Cohort (class) 15 graduates: Dr. Yasser Kandeel, Dr. Wessam Mankoula, Dr. Ahmed Etman, Dr. Amgad Elkholy (Egypt FETP coordinator), Dr. Mohamed Hafez, Leah Burn (CDC/NAMRU3 Epidemiologist), Dr. Maisa Omara, Dr. Marwa Amin, and Dr. Mohamed Abdelwahab.

Scorecard Assessment of Egypt Field Epidemiology Training Program

From January 13th to January 17th, 2012, Dr. Mohannad Al Nsour - Executive Director, EMPHNET joined an international team and the Egypt Field Epidemiology Training Program (FETP) staff to conduct a facilitated self-assessment (or "scorecard") of the program. The team was comprised of Dr. Dionisio Herrera - Director, TEPHINET, Dr. Mohannad Al-Nsour - Executive Director, EMPHNET, Dr. Donna Jones - Medical Epidemiologist, CDC Atlanta, Genessa Giorgi - Public Health Advisor and Regional Manager, CDC Atlanta, Dr. Christopher Zimmerman - Influenza Technical Advisor, CDC Egypt, Dr. Amgad El Kholy, Director of Egypt FETP. The team had the opportunity to meet and discuss the program with many key stakeholders, including Dr. Abeer Barakat - Minister Assistant, Egypt Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP), Dr. Amr Kandeel - First Undersecretary, Egypt MoHP, Dr. Zein Alabedein Eltahir - Communicable Disease Director, Egypt MoHP, Dr. Samir Rifaey - ESU Director. The team also met with MoHP Egypt FETP graduates and current residents. They also met with Dr. Mohammed Hassan - Adviser, Egyptian Board of Epidemiology, Dr. Erica Dueger - Director of the Global Disease and Detection and Response Program (GDDRP) at CDC/Naval Medical Research Unit-3 (NAMRU-3) in Egypt and FETP graduates that work at CDC/NAMRU3.

A review of the status of Egypt program across several core program areas was conducted by the team together with the program staff. The review process identified important strengths as well as some key areas for improvement. Recommendations were developed in collaboration with the program and presented to Dr. Amr Kandeel - First Undersecretary, Egypt MoHP, on the final day of the activity.

It's worth mentioning that Egypt MoHP, in cooperation with CDC, initiated Egypt's FETP in 1993. Throughout the last twenty years, the program has graduated over one hundred trained field epidemiologists. Over those years, Egypt FETP has continued making valuable contributions to improve public health in Egypt, its graduates are at senior-level officials at MoHP, and its residents have responded to all major outbreaks.

Egypt's MoHP plans to utilize findings from the scorecard assessment to further strengthen and expand the program to serve as platform for FETPs in the Eastern Mediterranean Region. TEPHINET, EMPHNET and CDC will remain engaged to support development and implementation of a work plan in support of the recommendations. This activity demonstrated the usefulness of this assessment process for the program and EMPHNET hopes to continue to support implementing this process on other programs in the region.