

ENGAGE INTERNSHIP

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Editor's Letter

Welcome to the seventh edition of the "ENGAGE" Bulletin! In this issue, we showcase the rich experiences and achievements of our interns and mentors.

Within the pages that follow, we explore an internship opportunity that resulted in the development of five manuscripts, and we celebrate the graduation of our largest cohort to date. We also include a success story from one of our passionate interns and feature two first-time mentors and their experience within the ENGAGE Program. Finally, we also share what former interns said about their internships through their testimonials and lots more.

We hope the following pages offer you a delightful read and that they serve as a source of inspiration for you all.

ENGAGE Editorial Team,



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Feature Story

An Internship Resulting in Five Manuscripts



In the summer of 2023, a group of ambitious interns embarked on a journey within the domain of mental health research. From July to October, these interns, coming from different countries and similar educational backgrounds, collaborated on a project focusing on a cross-sectional, nationally representative survey addressing mental health and psychosocial issues among children and adolescents in Jordan.

The project's objective was to provide robust and comprehensive evidence that would support effective national policymaking in Jordan in relation to mental health. Covering every governorate, including public, private, UNRWA, and Zaatari camp schools, as well as non-formal education centers, the study aimed to shed light on the mental health landscape of the nation's youth.

The decision to involve interns in the project was a strategic one, aiming to instill in the next generation of public health professionals a fresh mindset for driving change. Interns, selected based on their passion, interests, and academic backgrounds, came from different countries, including Jordan, Egypt, and Yemen.

Under the guidance of Center of Excellence for Applied Epidemiology (CEAE) Director, Dr. Yousef Khader, and Technical Officer, Dr. Sara Abu Khudair, they underwent a holistic training experience. The training the interns took helped enhance their proficiency in understanding project implementation phases, data analysis, and scientific writing, culminating in the development of manuscripts for future publication.

Of course, like other projects of this magnitude, the endeavor didn't come free of its own set of challenges. After all, it is a challenge to coordinate with interns from different countries and through time zones. However, the team anticipated this issue and implemented remote collaboration strategies, thus mitigating potential miscommunication. Commenting on this, Dr. Abu Khudair said, "The diversity of nationalities among interns turned out to be a blessing in disguise, as this required them to delve deeper into the Jordanian context while fostering knowledge exchange and networking."

The Interns' Journey in Manuscript Development

The interns actively participated in disseminating data and formulating their research questions, which contributed to the project from diverse perspectives. “The interns came up with their own unique research questions and it was interesting to see how they always had input and insights to share”, added Dr. Abu Khudair, who co-mentored the interns step by step in the early stages of the internship alongside Dr. Khader. The process of manuscript development involved formulating research questions, simultaneous analysis, and writing under the supervision of mentors.

Reflecting on Success and Future Prospects

The success of the internship program was evident in its achievement of the goal of producing multiple manuscripts and its role in empowering interns to become future researchers. Dr. Abu Khudair emphasized the importance of this experience for personal and professional growth, highlighting the role of publication in a researcher's portfolio.

Unveiling the Transformative Journey

The five interns, Ahmed Al-Madhwahi, Bayan Labib, Dalia Al-Hourani, Olla Hamdan, and Reham Lasheen, shared their unique insights and reflections on their journey within the mental health research internship at EMPHNET. Each intern shed light on their motivations, experiences, challenges, and the impact this internship had on their personal and professional growth below.

Motivations for Applying

Ahmed, a master's student in epidemiology, applied for the internship with the goal

of developing technical and professional experience. Olla, a public health student, expressed her motivation for aligning her practical experience with her academic interests. Reham, a medical doctor and public health researcher, saw the internship as a tailored opportunity to enhance her analytical skills, while Dalia, a Ph.D. student, sought to improve her scientific manuscript writing skills. Finally, Bayan, with a master's in public health, was eager to witness real-life public health professionals at work, especially in the context of mental health.

Expectations

For Olla, the internship exceeded expectations as it provided her with an opportunity to work on significant projects within a team, particularly focusing on mental health issues among children and adolescents in Jordan. Reham expressed eagerness to see the publication outcomes, emphasizing the value of gaining knowledge about the mental health landscape in Jordan. Dalia found the internship aligning with her expectations, particularly in studying the mental health of children and adolescents.

Challenges Faced

Ahmed said he faced challenges in finding comparable literature for his topic but expressed enthusiasm for the insightful perspective it provided, making him look at the camp vs non-camp refugee conditions from a new lens. Olla found navigating the complexities of the study and translating findings into actionable insights for policy decisions challenging yet compelling. Dalia did not find any part particularly challenging but emphasized the importance of more meetings and discussions about data analysis. Reham was impressed by the amount of knowledge gained during the literature review, result analysis, and discussion of findings. Finally, Bayan found the data analysis part challenging yet rewarding.

Personal and Academic Interests

Olla felt that the project aligned perfectly with her interest in public health and her academic background. Reham saw the project as an opportunity to dive deeper into her personal interests and gain more clarity about her academic ones. Dalia, with prior experience in mental health, felt the project not only aligned with her personal and academic interests but was also related to her career. Bayan saw the project as an excellent practice for the theories learned at university and a great chance to meet experts in public health. Ahmed said that working on mental health and seeing how certain instruments are integrated into a study was useful.

Reflections on the Internship Objectives

Olla significantly honed her skills in scientific writing during the internship, deepening her understanding of public health issues. Reham said that her data analysis skills were enhanced while appreciating the sessions on working with SPSS and analyzing large datasets. Dalia emphasized that scientific writing and data analysis skills are continuously evolving, and this experience provided a unique journey of learning. Ahmed said that Dr. Khader's constructive feedback on various sections significantly improved his academic writing abilities. Bayan identified different problems associated with mental health among children and adolescents and she gained a deep understanding of the instruments used for evaluation and analysis.

Developing Manuscripts for Publication

Reham found the experience successful, appreciating the step-by-step approach to building the manuscript. From her end, Dalia considered having a scientific manuscript

ready for publication citing her as the first author a significant success. Finally, Bayan found the idea of finishing one part of the manuscript at a time and sending it for review extremely useful.

Continuing Engagement in Research

Olla, in her final semester of completing her Master of Public Health, hasn't had the opportunity to further engage in mental health research but remains optimistic about exploring future opportunities. Reham, now a Ph.D. scholar of population health in Ireland, is continuously engaged with research projects. Dalia, with a background in mental health research, is continuing her work on her Ph.D. dissertation related to the mental health field. Bayan, having secured an academic job since completing the internship, is now fundamentally engaged in research.

Contributions to Personal and Professional Growth

Olla highlighted the significant contribution to her growth by enhancing her research skills, understanding of public health issues, and ability to work collaboratively. Dalia emphasized that meeting professionals and learning from their experiences contributed to her ways of analyzing things and thinking outside the box. Bayan found the internship useful in practicing skills such as professional emailing, literature review, data analysis, and academic writing.

The Wishlist!

Olla wished for a longer duration to delve deeper into the project. Bayan wished for the chance to attend lectures or workshops on-site, desiring a closer connection with the EMPHNET team.

Incorporating Experience into Future Endeavors

Olla intends to integrate the valuable experience gained from her internship by dedicating more attention to mental health research, particularly focusing on early interventions with refugee populations. Reham envisions mental health projects being included in her future works, either as standalone projects or in association with other health or social issues. Dalia, inspired by the internship, plans to pursue the mental health of children and adolescents soon. Bayan is now more interested in roles that may help in solving or reducing mental health issues in children and hopes to focus on issues in children’s upbringing that lead to such problems.

The mental health project led by Dr. Yousef Khader and Dr. Sara Abu Khudair stands as a testament to the impact of mentorship on shaping the future of mental health research. The engagement of interns from diverse backgrounds and the successful development of manuscripts underscores the effectiveness of collaborative efforts in advancing public health knowledge. The interns' perspectives highlight the success of EMPHNET's mental health research internship in nurturing future leaders. Their diverse motivations, challenges, and reflections underscore the program's impact on personal and professional development, emphasizing the importance of practical experiences in shaping the next generation of researchers.



ANNOUNCEMENT

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Celebrations

Celebrating Excellence: Congratulations to ENGAGE's Graduates!



On December 21, 2023, EMPHNET marked a significant achievement by celebrating the graduation of 18 interns who successfully completed their training. During the event, the interns presented their work and shared their experiences, reflecting the culmination of their internship journey.

This cohort is special for several reasons, in terms of numbers, it's the largest ENGAGE cohort yet, with 18 interns from Cameroon, Jordan, Yemen, Egypt, Sudan, and the USA. The interns joined different units and teams as well. Units involved included; Disease Control and Prevention, Research and Policy, Polio and Routine Immunization, Workforce Capacity, Partnership and Resource Mobilization, Knowledge Exchange and Networking, E-Learning and Training, and Technology and Innovative Solutions.

This cohort left a notable mark through their contributions, with the development of five manuscripts during the mental health internship, showcasing not only their size but also the remarkable energy and ambition each intern brought to the program.

Attending both physically and virtually, 13 graduates presented their experiences, highlighting both their achievements and challenges faced. Their mentors also attended the meeting along with EMPHNET's Executive Director, Dr. Mohannad Al-Nsour, and the ENGAGE Program Team. The interns' presentations offered insights into the projects they worked on, challenges faced, lessons learned, and future aspirations. An open discussion followed, during which graduates and mentors shared views on the program and suggested improvements, including the creation of an Alumni group or mailbox for graduates and the possibility to rotate within different teams. Eno Ethel Ambo, a past Disease Control and Prevention Intern, expressed gratitude, stating, "I'm thankful for my mentors and coordinator who supported me along the way, and thankful for the friends I made along the way."

The event also included addresses given by the ENGAGE Team and EMPHNET's Executive Director, Dr. Al-Nsour. Dr. Al-Nsour congratulated the graduates, emphasizing that this day marked not only the end of their time with EMPHNET but also the beginning

of a new chapter in their professional journey. He urged the graduates to apply the lessons they learned and thanked the mentors for their support.

“This experience is not just a milestone but a foundation upon which you will build your careers”, added Dr. Al-Nsour.

In her address, Communications and Networking Team Leader, Ms. Dana Shalabi, congratulated the cohort and said that this cohort has been a pleasure to work with and is excited to see how they continue being successful after the completion of the internship.

From her end, Communications and Networking Officer, and an ENGAGE Alumni who is currently running the program, Ms. Meral Al-Gunaid shared that she feels a great sense of pride and joy for getting the opportunity to give back to the program by being part of an intern’s journey.

In conclusion, the graduation ceremony captured a mix of contemplation, celebration, and anticipation of the future. As these interns move forward in their careers, they take with them not just acquired knowledge and skills but also the treasured memories of their internship, shaping a foundation for a promising and optimistic tomorrow.



ANNOUNCEMENT

Explore peer-reviewed studies curated from the Eastern Mediterranean Region in our monthly Research Digest. Each issue provides concise summaries and analyses of selected studies, delivering the latest advancements in non-communicable disease research.

Check them out [here](#).

Success Story

Seizing Opportunities to Grow: Entesar's Success Story



Entesar, a past intern at EMPHNET's Workforce Capacity Unit, attended the 11th edition of the World Innovation Summit in Education (WISE) in Doha, Qatar. The Summit, held on December 28-29, 2023, centered around the theme "Creative Fluency: Human Flourishing in the Age of AI." It brought together influential figures, ministers, and diplomats to discuss the transformative power in the evolving AI landscape.

At WISE, Entesar gained insights into the collaborative efforts required to tackle complex education issues, including countering disinformation and leveraging Artificial Intelligence (AI) to enhance workforce resilience. During panel discussions, speakers explored AI's role in improving education access, narrowing the digital gap, and aligning higher education with industry needs. Entesar's participation reflects a commitment to seizing opportunities for growth in the dynamic landscape of public health and education.

Motivation for Participation

Motivated by her keen interest in AI and its pivotal role in today's world, Entesar seized the unique opportunity to participate in the summit. Her goal was to explore the latest

advancements, connect with professionals, and contribute insights gained from her internship at EMPHNET to the discussions.

Entesar saw the summit as a platform perfectly suited for highlighting and sharing the best practices in workforce development, she learned about through her involvement in the work of EMPHNET and the International Academy of Public Health (IAPH). She added that this participation would also help cultivate more opportunities for international collaboration to address global education challenges, emphasizing workforce capacity building. This event also helped her explore the intersection between education and technology and the means to implement innovative technologies to enhance workforce training. In her opinion, this vision is seamlessly aligned with EMPHNET's commitment to training public health workers and developing curriculum and materials. Therefore, the summit presented a valuable space where Entesar's interests and the organization's goals were met, thus creating a meaningful opportunity for collaboration and learning.

Entesar emphasized the importance of discussing relevant topics by saying "It's really important to talk in the language of the times, which is the language of artificial intelligence."

Learning Experiences

Reflecting on her internship, Entesar highlighted the impact of the WISE Summit 11 on her understanding of the foundations of building educational content and how to use artificial intelligence mechanisms to develop training curricula to meet the requirements of the times. Notably, she added, sessions addressing AI in education and AI ethical frameworks, allowed her to draw parallels with EMPHNET's initiatives and work, particularly the recently launched "Ethics in Public Health" course.

Her insights expanded further to workforce development, a domain she explored collaboratively with her mentors Dr. Haitham Bashier and Dr. Ruba Al-Souri. Together, they worked on a monitoring and evaluation project for Field Epidemiology Training Program (FETP) graduates. They also examined how they can build trust among the workforce who have concerns about AI potentially displacing jobs and how to make them feel more comfortable about using AI and technology.

According to Entesar, the summit was also a perfect place for her to work on establishing partnerships with organizations sharing similar workforce development goals, and for creating a strong network for collaborative efforts, as well as integrating responsible AI practices into education and training programs, ensuring ethical use and maximizing the benefits of artificial intelligence, specifically for workforce development.

Personal Growth

Beyond professional gains, Entesar said that her involvement in the summit fueled her personal growth. Networking opportunities improved her communication, debate, and persuasion skills. Through attending debate sessions, she was exposed to different perspectives. She also said, "The WISE summit highlighted the role of youth- like me in shaping the future of AI in education and provided a valuable experience navigating the field of artificial intelligence. In

my opinion, true intelligence lies in acceptance, adaptation, learning, and leveraging AI tools to enhance productivity."

Entesar expressed her gratitude for EMPHNET's support and commended the organization for the trust placed in her. She also appreciated her mentors who trusted her to represent EMPHNET at the summit. This fostered a sense of responsibility and reinforced her commitment to contributing meaningfully to the event. She said, "The trust and responsibility bestowed upon me by my mentors not only empowered me but also instilled a sense of duty."

Future Contributions

Dr. Bashier, Entesar's mentor, actively encouraged her to provide actionable insights and recommendations that could be considered for implementation within EMPHNET. According to Entesar, Dr. Bashier's initiative to seek input from Entesar not only empowered her as an intern but also fostered a culture of open dialogue and idea exchange within the organization. Looking ahead, Entesar envisions enhancing courses by integrating AI features and contributing to proposals that seamlessly blend AI into the organization's materials and curriculum.

Tips and Advice

In sharing her success story, Entesar emphasizes the importance of passion, a love for learning, and the courage to face challenges. She attributes her growth to the support of her mentors and the ENGAGE Program Team, portraying her internship not as a mere stint but as a transformative journey where she felt like a valued colleague.

Entesar's success story stands as a testament to the opportunities that arise when passion meets purpose, showcasing how an internship can evolve into a transformative experience, shaping both personal and professional aspirations.

Mentorship Corner

Navigating First-Time Mentorship Experience with Sara and Mazen

In this edition, we reflect on two experiences of first-time mentors at EMPHNET; Instructional Designer, Eng. Sara Ali, and Information Technology Specialist, Mr. Mazen Abu Khadijeh. As we navigate through their narratives, we witness the profound impact mentorship can have on both mentor and mentee. From Sara's meticulous planning in the dynamic field of

electronic learning to Mazen's hands-on guidance of a fresh IT graduate, these stories highlight the significance of adaptability, trust, and a commitment to mutual growth. Join us as we explore the first-time mentorship endeavors that not only enriched the mentees but also provided a foundation for the mentors' own personal and professional development.

First-Time Mentorship Journey at ENGAGE: Eng. Sara Ali



In the dynamic field of electronic learning, the role of an Instructional Designer is pivotal in shaping educational experiences that transcend traditional boundaries. Eng. Sara Ali, a professional working as an Instructional Designer at the Workforce Capacity/Electronic Learning and Training Unit at EMPHNET, shares her experience of being a mentor at EMPHNET for the first time.

Sara's mentorship journey began when her team faced a shortage and urgently needed

support to launch a project. Recognizing the need for an educational designer, she proposed the idea of bringing in a student intern from Middle East University (MEU) to fulfill both the project requirements and the intern's university requirements. The Workforce Capacity Team Leader, and her manager Dr. Haitham Bashier, supported the idea, thus paving the way for this mentorship opportunity.

As a result, she had the chance to mentor Balqis Nasser, an Education Technology student from MEU in her last semester. During her time with us, Balqis contributed to a project that included the development of courses for new EMPHNET employees using Articulate Storyline 360, an e-learning authoring tool used at EMPHNET.

Talking about how she prepared for the mentorship role, Sara says that she invested a lot of time in planning and identifying key points to guide her mentee, leveraging her existing experience. This planning aimed to enhance her mentee's skills and align with the internship objectives.

Sara added that Balqis's willingness and dedication to learn suggested growth in both her professional and personal dimensions. In addition, experiencing a real work environment provided valuable insights that will likely benefit her in future endeavors.

Sara talked about techniques and strategies she used to foster a trusting relationship with her mentee as she found this crucial. Some of the techniques she used were: encouraging collaboration with other team members, scheduling regular one-on-one meetings, and treating Balqis as a new team member rather than a temporary intern, which fostered a sense of belonging as well.

Recognizing the exchange of experiences, Sara tailored her mentorship as a mutual learning process. She shared with us one key learning that she shared with her mentee in relation to working in instructional design, which emphasized the importance of the learning experience over design aesthetics.

Regarding challenges, Sara stated that they did face challenges such as terminology differences, and these were addressed through regular meetings and supplementary learning materials.

“Ensuring Balqis understood her role as a learner was crucial for a mutually beneficial relationship. My role, as a mentor, extends beyond task delegation to ensure active learning and skill development.”

Reflecting on the mentorship, Sara shared that this experience enhanced her skills in managing individuals with minimal experience and in

providing constructive feedback. To prospective mentors, Sara suggests prioritizing planning and dedicating adequate time to interns, while also defining clear objectives for them from the start.

“Understanding what you can contribute to the intern's learning journey is essential”, Sara added and emphasized that a mentor's commitment is key to effective guidance.


Regarding future mentorship opportunities, Sara said she would definitely mentor again, as she enjoys sharing experiences with those entering the instructional design field or considering a career shift. However, she acknowledges potential challenges such as time constraints. When asked about what she would do differently next time, she said she would focus on making the mentorship more planned and organized for a smoother experience.

As we navigate Sara's insightful journey, which emphasizes meticulous planning, fostering a learning-centric approach, and the implementation of strategies to overcome challenges, it becomes evident that mentorship is a cornerstone for cultivating interns' potential. We wish continued success to Sara and her mentee, Balqis, as they contribute to the evolving landscape of educational design in their own separate ways. To aspiring mentors, may this story inspire a dedication to effective guidance and ways to challenge yourself.

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Check out our new course titled “Public Health Ethics” on EMPHNET’s Learning Management System (LMS). It is a self-paced course that addresses a range of ethical issues within the field of public health.

[Enroll here](#)



First-Time Mentorship Experience at ENGAGE: Mr. Mazen Abu Khadijeh



Embarking on the journey of mentorship for the first time can be both challenging and rewarding. Mazen, an experienced professional, took on the role of mentor driven by the immediate needs of his team and the opportunity to guide a fresh IT graduate.

It all started when Mazen found himself in a situation where the team was overloaded with tasks, and a solution presented itself in the form of hosting an intern. Seizing the opportunity, Mazen welcomed Tareq Al Hiasat, a fresh IT graduate, into the team during a period of high demand, specifically the preparations for an upcoming conference.

Mazen shared with us, that this is his first time being a mentor to an intern, in his previous experience, he did supervise newcomers and led a team of people, but never actually guided and mentored a fresh graduate with zero experience.

Unlike traditional mentorship scenarios with a defined project, Mazen's mentorship with Tareq was more dynamic. Tareq's role was to provide

support during the conference preparations and for daily tasks in which the IT team supported other EMPHNET teams. This hands-on experience allowed Tareq to dip his toes in different responsibilities and routine tasks, adding a layer of complexity to the mentorship.

Before starting the mentorship, Mazen's preparation involved making a list of tasks to guide Tareq and to provide the necessary skill enhancement during his internship. Once Tareq joined, they immediately delved into these tasks, aligning them with the internship objectives and Mazen's expertise.

Through the mentorship, Mazen witnessed Tareq's transformation from a fresh graduate with minimal practical experience to someone capable of handling tasks independently and delivering successful outcomes. The mentorship aimed not just to fulfill immediate tasks but also to enhance Tareq's professional growth.

Mazen stressed the importance of trust and a strong mentor-mentee relationship. By involving Tareq in higher-level activities and sitting together in the same office, Mazen created an environment of shared responsibilities, gradually entrusting Tareq with more challenging tasks in the area of technical support.

Recognizing the broad spectrum of career choices within the IT field, Mazen guided Tareq on how to think about defining his path. The mentorship approach included providing advice, and resources, and encouraging independent problem-solving to empower Tareq in making informed decisions.

Both Mazen and Tareq faced the challenge of being new to this experience. Mazen, being a first-time mentor, and Tareq, going through his first internship. Despite time constraints, Mazen focused on guiding Tareq during his internship, emphasizing the mutual learning experience they were both undertaking. Mazen highlighted the importance of a mutually beneficial

mentorship, where both parties gain valuable insights. Tareq's fresh perspective challenged Mazen to revisit basic concepts, creating a symbiotic relationship that contributed to the growth of both mentor and mentee.

Reflecting on personal growth, Mazen acknowledged that the experience reinforced fundamental concepts and contributed to his professional development by refreshing foundational knowledge.

Advising other new mentors, Mazen said it's essential to build a friendly relationship with their mentees, allocate sufficient time for development, and giving feedback. "In mentorship, building a friendly relationship and providing gradual guidance are key to a successful journey of mutual growth," says Mazen, emphasizing the importance of a supportive environment.

When asked if he would be interested in being a mentor again, Mazen affirmed his willingness to mentor again if the need arises, driven by a passion for sharing experiences and helping others in their professional journeys. Reflecting on his own experience, Mazen expressed a new passion for mentoring, stating, "Being a mentor is about helping others navigate their professional journeys, echoing the support I once needed as a fresh graduate."

In conclusion, Mazen's first-time mentorship experience at ENGAGE highlights the transformative power of mentorship, emphasizing the importance of adaptability, trust, and a commitment to mutual growth. Aspiring mentors can draw inspiration from Mazen's journey, shaping the next generation of professionals with dedication and enthusiasm.



Testimonials

Testimonials of Former Interns

Hear directly from the heart of ENGAGE- our Former Interns!



"I interned at EMPHNET's Research and Policy Department for one month in the summer of 2023, guided by Dr. Sara Abu Khudair. The experience was insightful, starting with a survey on the mental health of children in Jordan. The study emphasized the importance of early interventions and provided crucial insights for policy decisions.

I also contributed to a research surveillance study on Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) at Al-Basheer Hospital, led by Vanderbilt University Medical Center. Additionally, attending a Cervical Cancer conference with EMPHNET and the Ministry of Health broadened my understanding of health challenges and exposed me to diverse perspectives.

The commitment to public health at EMPHNET was evident across teams. Dr. Sara Abu Khudair's mentorship and collaborative projects enhanced my skills and deepened my knowledge of public health research in Jordan. Grateful for the knowledge gained, relationships built, and challenges faced during this memorable experience."

- Research and Policy Intern,
Olla Hamdan



"I had the honor of finishing a content writing internship at EMPHNET. This was a very worthwhile and enlightening experience. The ability to adequately translate text was one of the difficulties I encountered during my internship. But thanks to my team's help and cooperation, I was able to successfully conquer this obstacle. I relished every second of my time at EMPHNET, and if I had one desire, it would be to have been given the chance to take on more responsibilities. In addition to being useful for my career, the knowledge and abilities I acquired during this internship were also intimately related to my love of public health. Overall, my time at EMPHNET was a life-changing event that had a lasting impact on both my professional and personal development. I will take the beneficial knowledge and experiences I got from this internship with me as I advance in my profession, and I'll continue to be dedicated to having a positive influence in the public health sector."

- Knowledge Exchange and Networking Intern,
Leen Al-Kittawi





"I want to express my gratitude for the opportunity to be part of EMPHNET's internship program. Contributing to mental health research aligns with my long-standing career goal, and this experience has been both challenging and invigorating. Over the seven years dedicated to mental health, this internship has made me a more focused researcher, adept at producing professional manuscripts.

Being part of the EMPHNET team has been an incredible honor, fostering both professional and personal development. The program emphasized the purpose of research in empowering populations and honed my skills in solving mysteries and understanding causation. The internship focused on children's and adolescents' mental health in Jordan, offering valuable insights into data analysis and scientific writing. I aspire to publish my manuscript in the near future, thanks to the skills gained during this experience.

I appreciate the trust placed in me to contribute to EMPHNET's research and policy team. Your guidance over the past four months has been invaluable, enhancing my manuscript writing skills. I look forward to applying these lessons in my future career, and I hope to stay in touch as I progress in the industry."

*- Research and Policy Intern,
Dalia Al-Hourani*



"I'm deeply grateful and honored for the opportunity to take part in the Mental Health Internship offered by EMPHNET, under the supervision of Dr. Yousef. This internship provided me the chance to contribute to a national study on mental health among children and adolescents. The experience was enriched by interactions with experts like Dr. Yousef and others in the public health field. Group sessions and one-on-one interactions allowed me to learn directly from their experiences. The communication team's support and kindness added to the overall positive experience. I look forward to future collaborations and participation in different events."

*- Research and Policy Intern,
Bayan Labib*





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“During my internship with EMPHNET, I had the privilege of working on the project titled "The Jordan National Mental Health Survey of Children and Adolescents." My role involved writing a scientific manuscript.

The process began with reviewing a previously written study to understand potential topics. After online meetings and discussions, each intern selected a topic to initiate the scientific report. Regular online group meetings and one-on-one sessions with mentors provided detailed guidance on the writing process, emphasizing necessary steps and potential pitfalls. Additional online group meetings facilitated collaborative problem-solving, where fellow interns and I discussed challenges and progress. This allowed us to fix issues successfully and fostered connections with diverse individuals from various departments.

This internship significantly improved my writing skills, time management, and understanding of scientific report composition. I gained proficiency in using data analysis tools, proper data analysis techniques, and acquired various new skills. Working with EMPHNET was a rewarding experience, and I am grateful for the valuable mentorship that guided me throughout the entire process.”

*- Research and Policy Intern,
Razan Shalabi*

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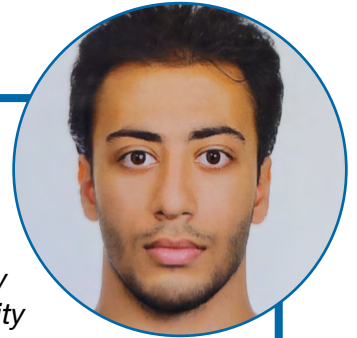
“I interned at EMPHNET for one month at the Knowledge Exchange and Networking department, my first week had mixed emotions of both nervousness and excitement. I was excited to acquire new skills, get engaged in the working environment and meet new people, but in the meantime, I was afraid and nervous as everything was new.

Honestly, it was not easy for me getting into a new environment, meeting, and dealing with new people. At the beginning of my training I was shy and did not know how to deal with people in a working environment, but my supervisor and co-workers there were very kind and nice to me, and made me comfortable, so day after day I was getting more used to the people and was more relaxed around them which had a good effect on me as I was more open than before to dealing with new people and building productive relationships with others.

From the first day I filled out the objective form with my mentor, then my supervisor informed me about the different departments of (EMPHNET), and about the job description of each one and most importantly about the role of the department that I was training in. In conclusion, I am thankful that I have this opportunity to experience something new and develop my personality.”

*- Knowledge Exchange and Networking Intern,
Shahed Oweis*

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"After a fulfilling 4-month internship with EMPHNET, I'm grateful for the opportunity to work with this outstanding organization and its responsive and friendly community members. While virtual, Mr. Mohammad Hamad's continuous reminder that we're part of the EMPHNET family created a strong sense of connection.

Though faced with the challenge of Dr. Yousef Khader's busy schedule, I felt fortunate to be under his supervision. Drafting a potentially publishable research paper provided valuable insights, and Dr. Khader's session on organizing study results and his detailed written feedback were particularly beneficial, showcasing his extensive experience.

In conclusion, my internship experience, though with some areas for improvement, was valuable. I'm glad to have been briefly part of the EMPHNET team, learning instrumental skills for the future. My sincere thanks to the team, and I wish them all the best."

*- Research and Policy Intern,
Ahmed Al-Madhwhi*



"My internship with the Workforce Capacity Unit was a transformative journey, providing a dynamic space for professional growth. Engaging in diverse tasks like planning training curriculums, mentoring programs, and attending conferences deepened my understanding of workforce planning. In addition, participating in mission implementation, report writing, data collection, and review processes enhanced my analytical skills. What truly distinguished this internship was the strong relationships formed with colleagues and the exceptional mentorship I received. Their guidance and willingness to invest time in my development created a nurturing learning environment.

I am profoundly thankful for the cooperative spirit that defines the Workforce Capacity Unit. Each team member exhibited a genuine commitment to shared goals, and the collaborative ethos propelled the successful execution of projects."

*- Workforce Capacity Intern,
Entesar Omar*





"In July 2023, while pursuing my MPH, I remotely joined EMPHNET with the aim of contributing to evidence-based research in the Eastern Mediterranean Region through a systematic learning process. The EMPHNET personnel, both administrative and research teams, provided unwavering support, creating a familial atmosphere that proved invaluable during challenging times.

Participating in the Mental Health Internship Scheme, I proposed a research question exploring the impact of Adverse Childhood Events (ACEs) on help-seeking behaviors in adolescents. This question, evaluated for feasibility by mentors Dr. Yousef Khader and Dr. Sara Abu Khudair, received approval for further investigation.

The mentorship program's unique and flexible delivery allowed for a high level of independence and the vocal expression of ideas. Working on sections of the research article for two weeks, I received critical feedback from my mentors, transforming our dynamics into a productive partnership. Addressing my specific needs, a private session with Dr. Yousef focused on teaching quantitative data analysis on SPSS, a key skill improvement I sought.

Bi-weekly intern meetings provided a "safe space" to raise concerns, suggest improvements, and foster connections with fellow interns. Despite never meeting in person, these interactions were genuinely enjoyable. At the end of the internship, I successfully finalized my research paper, receiving kind feedback from mentors.

I highly recommend this internship, not only for early and mid-career researchers but also for senior researchers seeking a structured and supportive environment to contribute to evidence-based research in the region. EMPHNET is the go-to place for enthusiastic researchers."

*- Research and Policy Intern,
Reham Lasheen*



"I extend my heartfelt gratitude to EMPHNET, my mentor, and the ENGAGE Team for providing me with the opportunity to serve as a Content Development intern. This internship has been a valuable steppingstone in my career, offering me insightful advice and a genuine pleasure in working with everyone. The experience gained at EMPHNET is truly appreciated."

*- E-learning and Training Intern,
Balqis Al-Qaisi*





“Being of an African decent and a recent graduate, I was very skeptical when applying for an internship placement under the ENGAGE program of EMPHNET, but I eventually became happy when I received an email for an interview, and even more excited when I received an internship acceptance email. Ever since then it has been an amazing learning experience with each day bringing a different challenge and an opportunity to learn something new.

Interning at EMPHNET became that platform which offered me that transformative experience allowing me to develop critical skills and gain valuable knowledge in the field of public health research. During this period, I was exposed to diverse tasks that require me to work collaboratively with different teams, building my capacity to develop scientific research, review scientific documents and communicate my findings.

The support and guidance that I received from my mentors and supervisor was remarkable. They provided me with the necessary tools and resources to succeed in my role. They were always available, swift to respond and offered the necessary assistance to enable me to get the best out of my internship experience. My most memorable experience during my internship is our intern’s biweekly meetings where all interns meet to discuss our achievements, challenges of our past weeks and outline our objectives for the next 2 weeks. We also had the privilege of individually proposing what we need, to facilitate our internship experience and maximize the learning process. Biweekly meetings were more of a family time where interns got to know themselves better and created networks with peers from different countries and cultural backgrounds.

Considering that EMPHNET is the very first organization where I officially interned as a recent graduate, I count it as a privilege to be accepted into its ENGAGE program where I have acquired enhanced knowledge and skills which will serve as a base throughout my entire public health career. I am happy to say that I did not only gain intellectual knowledge from EMPHNET, but I also gained a sister who resides in Qatar and together we share beautiful friendship.

I sincerely appreciate EMPHNET for the add on to my professional and social life.”

*- Disease Control and Prevention Intern,
Eno Ethel Ambo*



GHD|EMPHNET: Working Together for Better Health

The Eastern Mediterranean Public Health Network (EMPHNET) is a regional network that focuses on strengthening public health systems in the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR) and beyond. EMPHNET works in partnership with ministries of health, non-government organizations, international agencies, private sector, and relevant institutions from the region and the globe to promote public health and applied epidemiology. To advance the work of EMPHNET, Global Health Development (GHD) was initiated to build coordination mechanisms with partners and collaborators. Together, GHD|EMPHNET is dedicated to serving the region by supporting efforts to promote public health policies, strategic planning, sustainable financing, resource mobilization, public health programs, and other related areas.

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