

# ENGAGE INTERNSHIP

JULY - DECEMBER 2022 NEWSLETTER - ISSUE 05



## In This Issue

- Editor's Letter
- Feature Story
- Success Stories
- Mentorship Corner
- Testimonials from our Past Interns
- Meet our New Interns

## Editor's Letter

We are happy to share with you the fifth issue of GHD|EMPHNET's internship newsletter "ENGAGE."

In this issue, we feature ENGAGE interns who were with us from July to December 2022, and we welcome new interns for the current cycle. We are also sharing success stories from interns who became employees. The issue further covers new mentors' experiences, and testimonials from former interns.

We hope that you enjoy reading this newsletter and we welcome your feedback.

*ENGAGE Editorial Team,*



**EMPHNET**

The Eastern Mediterranean  
Public Health Network

▶ GHD | EMPHNET: working  
together for better health

## Feature Story

### Dr. Tasnim Completes her Internship Despite the Challenges in Sudan

Dr. Tasnim Ali, a graduate of medicine, from Khartoum University, Sudan, started her Workforce Capacity internship in July 2022. She said that this opportunity was a milestone in her career and that it had a huge impact on her, as it has changed her mindset from treating individuals to caring for the whole community.

Dr. Tasnim started her career as a clinician then became a part of the medical assistance program in the World Food Program (WFP). Within that post, she helped to support people in underprivileged areas by extending medical services such as evacuations and recommendations for medical status.

As a Doctor in Sudan, and amidst the health-related issues she witnessed every day, she decided to go the extra mile to help people in need especially in remote areas. Thus, Dr Tasnim perused a master's in health care innovation from Arizona State University. She stated that she chose this major in order to be able to help and support people in need and improve their quality of life.

As a result, she thought that she should be more deeply involved with those communities. so, she decided to join the medical assistance team in Darfur. While doing that, Dr. Tasnim stumbled upon GHD|EMPHNET's ENGAGE internship program which she found to be perfect for her as it matches her aspirations. This opportunity, as she says, made her more aware of the core purpose of public health Which is centered around the community rather than individuals, and working from the preventive and protective perspectives instead of only the curative.

When we asked her why she chose this internship, Dr. Tasnim said that she adopted a



holistic approach, merging her studies with her training. She took advantage of the fact that they both focus on field epidemiology, and she felt that this internship will introduce her to public health prospects in her medical career that she may not have access to otherwise. She did not want to limit her abilities to simply treating patients or detecting cases, as she learned and wanted others to learn that there are always cases that you could have prevented if you had intervened at an earlier stage, and if you had enough knowledge to do so.

Dr. Tasnim's internship within the ENGAGE program was not easy, especially since it was virtual. Throughout her internship, the internet connection was unstable in Sudan, which made communicating with her mentor a challenge, most of the time. We even saw how challenging that was while conducting this interview, as we had many disruptions during the interview. Nevertheless, she completed her internship and met all her objectives.

Additionally, one of the challenges Dr. Tasnim faced was the excessive workload she had during her fieldwork, especially at the time of the floods and the spike in the cases of malaria and other infectious diseases. This fieldwork took from the time dedicated to the internship, so she had to make an extra effort to stay on track and

up to date. It was indeed challenging, but she tried to get the maximum out of this experience.

Dr. Tasnim's mentor and all the other team members she worked with were very flexible and tried to help her as much as they could. Her mentor used to assign her tasks to do on her own time whenever she had internet access. Her mentor also sought to make her experience as convenient as possible, setting up meetings depending on Dr. Tasnim's availability and internet connection. The mentor also advised and guided her on many things including epi info, which is a statistical software for epidemiology.

At the beginning of her internship, Dr. Tasnim's first task was to attend EMPHENT's WEBI series webinar on Monkeypox and to write a report on it, at that same time the first case of Monkeypox was detected in Sudan in West Darfour which is near South Darfour, where she works. She says she was lucky at that time because she got the best insight from health care professionals that are most knowledgeable about the situation. She used the information she got while doing the webinar brief to educate herself and the people around her about the disease and how to handle the cases.

Moreover, Dr. Tasnim adds that her biggest gain from this internship was that she learned how to use the epi info tool which she didn't know about or use before. This changed the way she did her work. She learned how to do case studies and used epi info as a surveillance tool, which

according to her, was magical compared to using old tools. She also said that she couldn't have learned about it without the help of her mentor or without coming across this internship. As a past intern, Dr. Tasnim wants to advice future interns to put lots of effort throughout the time they spend in the program and to use each and every minute to benefit from the internship.

She also advised interns to reach out to their mentors whenever they need to and to show them their eagerness to learn every day. She also wanted mentors to know that interns can be shy to ask, or they also may be uncertain at times. Therefore, it is up to them to make sure they create an environment where interns are comfortable to reach out and ask for advice.

Ms. Ilham Abu Khader, GHD|EMPHNET's Public Health Specialist, and Dr. Tasnim's mentor was very flexible and very understanding. According to Dr. Tasnim, Ms. Ilham welcomed her questions all the time and was considerate and understanding towards her difficult circumstances as well as the communication difficulties she faced due to her geographic location.

We as the ENGAGE internship team are very proud of interns such as Dr. Tasnim, and we are always happy to support them wherever they choose to be. We hope that this opportunity is always beneficial for them on a professional and personal level.

*“In the future, I think that I will be more aware and insightful to what should be done in the case of an outbreak, and how to handle it from the very starting point and how I should have an impactful input on the outbreak, so I'm more ready now”*

*Dr. Tasnim when asked about how the internship will help her in the future*

## Success Stories

### From an Intern to an Employee at GHD|EMPHNET

#### Rabi Assaf

#### Knowledge Exchange and Networking Officer Shares his Experience

Rabi started his internship with GHD|EMPHNET back in January 2021. In the time he spent as an intern, he contributed to our newsletters, articles, and E-library. When asked about his internship experience Rabi said that it was very eye opening. He learned many things working with his mentor Dana Shalabi, which he commended for being responsive and always providing opportunities for him to learn and grow. In his words “Dana always gave me honest and straight forward feedback, whenever I made a mistake, she would not only correct me but would actually take the time to explain where I went wrong and why.”



Even though his internship was virtual, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Rabi said that he felt like he was part of the Knowledge Exchange and Networking team, who were very welcoming and helped him throughout that time.

When asked about Rabi’s performance, Dana said “Rabi always asks for examples on things done before so he can learn from them, like asking for past concept notes to learn how to write one. He gives constructive input during brainstorming sessions and is always interested to take on new tasks”. As a result of his enthusiasm and hard work, Rabi was offered an extension to his three-months internship period, which he happily accepted.

From the internship, Rabi went on to graduate. As a part of his graduation celebration, he shared his news with his past mentor who, to his surprise, informed him that she had a vacancy on her team and would like him to join. Rabi joined GHD|EMPHNET’s team as a Knowledge Exchange and Networking Officer in July 2022. Six months into his employment, he said that working in such a healthy environment brought out the best in him. He exceeded what he thought were his limits and thinks that he still has a long way to go till he’s satisfied in terms of what he can bring to the GHD|EMPHNET table.

Rabi’s advice to future interns is to always take initiative and consider every task an opportunity to learn and grow. He also said that mentors should assign their interns tasks with a learning outcome in mind, as he thinks that he benefited most from tasks with clear objectives that taught him something new every time.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Application to ENGAGE New Cycle are Now Being Accepted !  
To apply for the Workforce Capacity internship

Apply Now

## Mays Hasan

### Knowledge Exchange and Networking Officer Shares her Experience

Stemming from her interest in being exposed to a valuable work experience, Mays Hasan, an Applied English graduate, joined ENGAGE within the Knowledge Exchange and Networking team in her last semester at the university.

Mays started her internship journey with setting different goals related to developing her professional and personal skills. She was interested in learning different writing styles, working on self-confidence through presentations and other interactive activities, and creating a professional network. She also expressed how she wanted to put what she learnt during the university into practice.



During the internship, she worked with her mentor on the EMPHNET Electronic Library (EEL). She prepared different action and promotional plans and helped in drafting the content related to EEL. Her mentor, Ms. Meral Al-Gunaid said: “Mays proactively sought out new tasks to work on with flexibility in doing different tasks and looking for more improvement.”

After one month of the internship, Mays wrote two articles that were approved and published on GHD|EMPHNET’s website. Which she considered a major milestone in her career. She further participated in writing and editing the Field Epidemiology Training Program (FETP) Newsletter, and various concept notes.

Mays said that she learned how to think strategically and work efficiently. “I also found this experience fruitful because I learned how to be responsible and committed to work, and I felt more productive as I participated in the work done by the team,” Mays added.

After her graduation, Mays was pleased to join GHD|EMPHNET as a Knowledge Exchange and Networking officer in August after receiving a job offer and proving that she was a good candidate for the department.

As advice, Mays encourages interns to set goals and to always request feedback from mentors, in order to make sure that they are on track.

Finally, she expressed her gratitude to GHD|EMPHNET for allowing her to practice actual work, and to be part of its team.



Application to ENGAGE New Cycle are Now Being Accepted !  
To apply for the Disease Control & Prevention internship

[Apply Now](#)

## Meet Our First Time Mentors

**Shimaa Al-Shareef – Human Resources Officer Shares her Experience as a First-Time Mentor**



As a first-time mentor, Human Resources (HR) Officer, Shimaa Al-Sharif, enjoyed this experience and described it as “Exciting, different, and very beneficial on a personal and professional level.”

Talking about her intern Hadeel Jaradeh, Shimaa said that Hadeel was an excellent intern. She was punctual, and a good listener, she also had an exceptional attention to details which made mentoring her easier.

The internship in the HR department has also another added value which is the diversity in work, as the intern goes over many processes at the same time and gets to meet and work with most of the employees. Shimaa also said that having Hadeel working physically from the office also made the internship run more smoothly for both of them.

According to Shimaa, mentorship is a very important experience in one’s career as it empowers both the intern and the mentor. When asked about the strategies she used, Shimaa explained that she used to set examples and elaborate on tasks. For example, while working on the internal system, she used to show Hadeel other final reports or documents in order for her to be able to hand over similar products. Also, if Shimaa had any comments, she would contact her and tell her what’s to be done to improve her outcomes.

Additionally, Shimaa gave her clear goals and objectives to accomplish in a specific time frame and worked with her to achieve them. She expressed her pride in Hadeel when she was able to accomplish challenging tasks that require more experience.

Shimaa believes that in order to make the internship successful, clear communication must exist between the intern and the mentor. To achieve that, she and the intern would sit together daily to discuss day-to-day tasks and she would make sure her intern is comfortable enough to tell her what she wants or needs to learn without hesitation.

Furthermore, as a first-time intern, Hadeel gained many skills including computer skills and Microsoft office. She also learned how to multi-task and be more flexible when dealing with personnel and with the internal system.

Shimaa also expressed her gratitude to the internship team for doing their best to run the program smoothly and for following up on all related issues. In addition, she wants to advise mentors to keep supporting interns, and to work with them as colleagues and never underestimate their abilities or point out their weaknesses as this what they’re here for.

## Pros of Hiring Past Interns

**Dr. Yusuf Khader** - Director of the Center of Excellence for Applied Epidemiology Talks about his Mentorship Experience and the Pros of Hiring Past Interns



With a background in teaching from the Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST), and being a mentor for hundreds of students, Dr. Yousef believes that mentorship is an essential part of knowledge exchange and that is of importance for enriching the expertise of the mentor and intern.

When asked about his mentorship and its importance, Dr. Yousef said that the internship program offers an opportunity for the mentor and the intern to work one-on-one, unlike

university halls where you guide a room full of students. That, in itself, provides the intern with not only information but also firsthand practical experience.

Dr. Yousef believes that by the end of the internship, interns would have gained the necessary skills that are needed for their work, therefore hiring a past intern is an excellent approach as opposed to hiring a new employee, as it saves time and effort that would else be spent on training new employees.

Another advantage is that the interns have already become familiar with the work environment, the guidelines, and the organization's objectives. In addition, they have gained the confidence and experience in their scope of work, which won't be found in other applicants from outside of the organization.

"For me, I prefer to hire an intern rather than a new applicant because when interns work in close contact with mentors, and are more involved in their projects, they build a relationship during the internship, and they set up values and objectives and work on achieving them as a team" said Dr. Yousef.

In conclusion, Dr. Yousef wanted to advise interns to be competitive and observant and to work hard on themselves to benefit from this experience. He also wanted to advise mentors to attract qualified people, and to follow up, monitor them, and give them guidance and support when needed in order to come up with a fruitful experience for both parties.

## Pros of Hiring Past Interns

**Ms. Dana Shalabi - Knowledge Exchange and Networking Team Leader Shares her Insight on ENGAGE and the Pros of Hiring Past Interns**



In light of her belief in the significance of giving dedicated interns the opportunity to be recruited, Ms. Dana Shalabi invested in hiring three employees who were former interns at the Knowledge Exchange and Networking department.

For Dana, the three-month internship period is more than enough for mentors to evaluate the skills of their interns such as their commitment and their quality of work. Thus, at the end of the internship, mentors can get an idea whether a person is a good fit for the department or not.

She described the past intern, now employee, Rabi Assaf, who was a student when he started the internship, as a hard worker with complementary personal and professional skills

that were required in the Knowledge Exchange and Networking team. For example, she noticed that he has great writing skills and editing skills, and he adheres to deadlines and respects policy.

Furthermore, Dana also talked about the other past interns she hired, Mays Hasan, who was very committed and interactive with other team members which was one of the standards that Ms. Dana considered before hiring her, and Ms. Meral Al Gunaid, who is now on a study leave to pursue her master's in Corporate Communications, Marketing, and Public Relations, which will be a great addition to the team's skills

"There is an advantage for hiring interns because mentors have already trained them for three months and evaluated their skills, which reduces the probation period," said Dana.

She also explained how working with interns is easier than working with newly hired employees because even if they have work experience, they will be tested and evaluated for three months, and, in some cases, employers may end up disappointed. On the other hand, the possibility of being disappointed with interns is less because there are previous expectations of their performance.

One of the lessons learned that Dana mentioned is that some mentors can fall into a trap when expecting that interns are familiar with everything, however, they still need to be treated like new employees in some orientation sessions.

In conclusion, Dana highlighted the importance of being a mentor and how it indirectly increases your leadership and communication skills which results in your future career development, so it is a win-win situation.



## Maintaining Good Relations with Interns

**Dr. Ekhlis Hailat – Public Health Specialist Presents the Work Done with her Intern Jack Carew**



After the internship period, maintaining a professional relationship between mentors and interns can be truly a win-win for both parties. Dr. Ekhlis Hailat was invited by her past intern, Jack Carew, to give a presentation to his colleagues, who are students at the University of Vermont’s Master of Public Health program. She was invited to discuss her work on brucellosis, the Field Epidemiology

Training Program, and One Health in Jordan. The presentation was coordinated virtually by Jack’s Professor in October 2022.

During the presentation, Dr. Ekhlis shared Jack’s experience in GHD|EMPHNET and his achievements throughout the internship. Thus, the students were very excited to know more about the internship program and were encouraged to apply for the next cycle.

Dr. Ekhlis said that she was very pleased that Jack contacted her after the internship, as he is clearly very satisfied with what he learned and wanted to share it with others. She added that she will write a PhD recommendation letter for Jack, coming from her interest in helping him achieve his future goals.

She also stressed that it is important for interns to stay in contact with mentors as an excellent way to increase the probability of future opportunities as mentorship is proven to help interns succeed in the future.

In conclusion, Dr. Ekhlis believes that it’s essential to have experience in the area you are mentoring someone in. Indeed, you can’t teach well if you haven’t experienced, learned from practice, and applied the same principles yourself.

ANNOUNCEMENT



Application to ENGAGE New Cycle are Now Being Accepted !  
To apply for the EMPHNET’s Bangladesh country office

[Apply Now](#)

## Testimonials – Words from our Former Interns



*“This Internship has been a remarkable professional development approach that improved my understanding and knowledge in field epidemiology and the public health discipline. It provided me with a valuable experience in synthesizing field epidemiology platforms to enhance health emergency preparedness and response capacities.*

*It was a wonderful opportunity to learn and get a better understanding of GHD|EMPHNET’s implementation of the Public Health Empowerment Program (PHEP) in different countries. Spending 12 weeks under the guidance of people who want to share their knowledge with me has been a great addition to my career.*

*During this internship, I have grown both personally and professionally. I am leaving it feeling more prepared and confident to take on different challenges. I will always be grateful that I was a part of the GHD|EMPHNET family. Thank you for this unique opportunity.”*

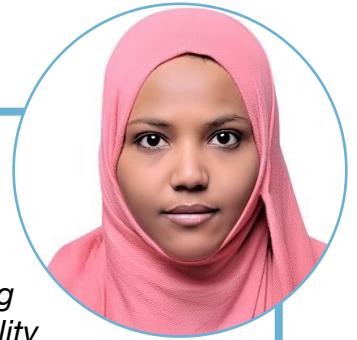
*Workforce Capacity Intern  
– Ahang Abdullah*



*“I’m glad that I decided to pursue this opportunity and challenge. I’ve learned so much from my mentor by simply being present and observing. I was able to put my knowledge to use and gain new skills from the time I spent in GHD|EMPHNET and from the responsibilities that were assigned to me. I really enjoyed working in such a trusting and encouraging environment.”*

*Human Resources Intern  
– Hadeel Jaradeh*





*“During my internship, I was introduced to field epidemiology training programs (FETPs) and was genuinely amazed by the quality of work and ability to build up such outstanding disease detection, risk mitigation strategy, and response planning capacity, this was truly an eye-opening experience.*

*My objective when I joined GHD|EMPHNET’s internship program was to enhance my skills and knowledge, and to have noticeable impact. I am pretty confident now -more than ever- that the bases for creating and maintaining an impact within Sudan and the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR) are established.*

*Finally, I cannot fully express my gratitude to the people who helped me throughout the internship and for their continued support, patience, and understanding. Also, I would like to thank my mentor for her unconditional support and guidance.”*

*Workforce Capacity Intern  
– Tasnim Ali*



*“First of all, I would like to thank GHD|EMPHNET’s Disease Control and Prevention team for giving me this opportunity, I would also like to thank my mentor Dr. Ekhlis Al-Hailat for her constant follow up and support.*

*This internship was a significant chance for me to gain as much knowledge as possible, which I needed through my studies on brucellosis.*

*I learned about the importance of disease surveillance, outbreak investigations, field studies of infectious diseases, and other matters related to public health, which helped me estimate and quantify the true burden and major risk factors of human and animal diseases.*

*There is no doubt that this experience and technical knowledge will be an addition to me professionally.”*

*Disease Control and Prevention Intern  
– Yaman Alhusban*



## Meet Our New Interns

We would like to introduce our new interns at ENGAGE.

Below is what they shared with us when asked what they hope to achieve from this internship.



### Ghada Dardour

Research and Policy

*“I am glad to be an intern at GHD|EMPHNET. My goal is to gain professional experience, skills and knowledge that will advance my career in the field of public health.”*



### Majd Arabiyat

Research and Policy

*“As a research and policy intern, I hope that this opportunity will enable me to acquire a firm foundation in various aspects of public health research. I am interested in pursuing a career path as a researcher, and I trust that my internship experience with GHD|EMPHNET will improve my work capabilities.”*



### Leen Abozaid

Partnership and Resource Mobilization

*“In this internship, I hope to learn more about EMPHNET and the many ways in which it contributes to enhancing healthcare outcomes within the EMR as well as globally.*

*While working with the Partnership and Resource Mobilization team, I hope to be able to learn more about how partnerships within the public health sector can be utilized effectively.*

*Additionally, I would like to contribute my experiences and work to make meaningful comparisons within the fields of research and epidemiology between the United States healthcare system and the EMR.”*



**Manar Alzaben**

Research and Policy

*“This is the kind of opportunity I was looking for to advance in my career, I hope this experience at GHD|EMPHNET will make me learn more and be more involved in the field of public health.”*



**Maya Marrow**

Workforce Capacity

*“I hope that by the end of my internship, I’ll learn from technical specialists, and gain greater knowledge about the FETPs and other EMPHNET initiatives, which will help me in my future profession. I also want to develop my report-writing skills and help in publishing different studies.”*

ANNOUNCEMENT



**Mark your Calendars for EMPHNET’s Eighth Regional Conference in October 2022**

We are pleased to announce that the Eighth EMPHNET Regional Conference will be held between October 22 and 25, 2023, in Amman, Jordan. With the central theme of the conference being “Advancing Public Health Preparedness and Response: Challenges, Opportunities, and Ways Forward”.

Keep an eye on our social media channels for the abstract submission announcement. [Read More](#)

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.

▶ Shmeisani, Abdallah Ben Abbas Street, Building No 42, P.O.Box: 963709, Postal Code: 11196 Amman, Jordan

▶ Tel: +962-6-5519962 Fax: +962-6-5519963

▶ [www.emphnet.net](http://www.emphnet.net) [info@emphnet.net](mailto:info@emphnet.net)