

Conduct FETP (PHEP-PEO) frontline cohorts in Afghanistan

Project Information

- ◆ **Department:** Center of Excellence for Applied Epidemiology
- ◆ **Unit:** Workforce capacity

OBJECTIVES

The project goal is to strengthen epidemiologic capacity at the national and sub-national level of the EPI and polio EOC staff in Afghanistan by improving the staff's ability to detect, investigate, and respond to vaccine-preventable diseases and events of public health importance or international concern.

REGIONS OF WORK

The cohorts will be implemented in Afghanistan

BENEFICIARIES

The targeted beneficiaries are the EOCs and the EPI staff with the focus on low performing provinces and.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

EMPHNET has extensive experience in introducing Field Epidemiology Training Programs (FETP) in the region, having successfully completed several cohorts of intermediate FETPs in Afghanistan. Given the evolving epidemiological landscape in Afghanistan, particularly with the recent detections of multiple wild poliovirus type 1 (WPV1) cases,

This project builds upon the ongoing Field Epidemiology Training Program (FETP) – Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Polio Eradication Officer (PHEP-PEO) – and Afghanistan Polio Management Information System (APMIS) initiatives from previous years. **Key updates:** The first cohort of FETP (PHEP-PEO) has been successfully completed, with all workshops and fieldwork finalized. The second cohort, initiated in June 2025, has reached its final workshop and graduation, which is scheduled for November 2025. The third cohort will begin training activities in Year Five. The project aims to strengthen Afghanistan's capacity to detect, prevent, and respond to public health threats, particularly polio and other vaccine-preventable diseases, by training field epidemiologists, enhancing mentorship, and improving digital polio data management. These interventions directly support the country's polio eradication goals while reinforcing routine surveillance, outbreak response, and broader public health system resilience.

PROJECT PHASES

This project will have two phases as follows:

Phase 1- Planning: The project will start by renewed the technical advisor and the technical coordinator to support Afghanistan FETP frontline cohorts. They will be adapting the PHEP-PEO curriculum and training materials based on need and country context. The streamlined curriculum will be translated in local languages.

Phase 2- Implementation: EMPHNET along with the technical advisor following the finalization of the curriculum during the first quarter will continue the implementation of the first cohort, then EMPHNET will start the second cohort by conducting the mentorship training followed by the four workshops and two fieldwork sessions.

Project Start and End Date	08/1/2024 – 12/31/2025
Funded by	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
Collaborators	Afghanistan Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) and Emergency Operations Center (EOC)

Currently . . .

The political transition in mid-August 2021 and the temporary pause of funding to Afghanistan's health system by donors have jeopardized the gains made in the past two decades. Furthermore, the evacuation of numerous healthcare providers, including EPI and polio program staff at the national and sub-national levels, has further hampered healthcare service provision in the country.

Political instability, prolonged conflict, and the resulting humanitarian crisis have exacerbated challenges such as high population movement, under development, poor livelihoods, and weakened health systems. These factors have further constrained vaccination efforts, leaving children vulnerable to debilitating diseases. The departure of immunization frontline workers, whose are left untraced, has negatively affected their performance, and has led to an increase in VPD outbreaks, resulting in a changing epidemiological situation for polio in Afghanistan. with The East region of the country has recently reported several cases of WPV1.

What's next . . .

GHD will continue implementing the second cohort Through this 4-month in-service training program, GHD will make sure to improve the capacity of the MoPH to prevent, detect and respond to public health priority issues and in turn can contribute to the polio eradication.

OUTCOMES BY NUMBERS

A total of 60 PHEP-POE from Afghanistan will be graduated.

2

AFETP curriculum was developed

1

Technical committee was established

GHD|EMPHNET Information: Global Health Development (GHD) and Eastern Mediterranean Public Health Network (EMPHNET) works at achieving its mission by responding to public health needs with deliberate efforts that allow for health promotion and disease prevention.

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