



The Eastern Mediterranean Public Health Network (EMPHNET)

EMPHNET NEWS

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

This quarter has passed by quickly with many achievements to highlight and remember. If I were to sum up the quarter in one word, it would be "inspirational", and I would highlight with pride the graduation of Iraq's fourth Field Epidemiology Training Program (FETP) and Yemen's second FETP cohort. We at EMPHNET acknowledge the effort of the FETP in both of these countries while recognizing the challenges and difficulties they face. Being conscious of the hardship that prevails in Yemen and Iraq, we offer courtesy and respect to the program Directors and Staff for their determination and devotion.

Our accomplishments during the past three months reflect commitment, dedication and diligence. Our work with the countries has never been stronger. We have worked to the best of our ability to introduce new projects to the region, where we managed to successfully kick off the project for strengthening sustainable public health capacity in the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR) for polio eradication and routine immunization. In addition, we were successful at kicking off the Integrated School Health project for Syrian refugees in partnership with NICEF and in close collaboration with Jordan's Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education.

Our achievements continue to mount as we retain focus on strengthening public health systems by lining up our activities with the essential public health functions of the EMR countries. In this context, we concentrate on strengthening surveillance, preparedness and response to disease outbreak and emergencies, workforce development, operational research, and other issues necessary for effective public health systems. In addition, we continue to invest in Information and Communication Technology, which we consider essential for health care solutions.

As a network that relies heavily on exchange, we look forward to investing more efforts in building new relations and cooperation with different agencies and stakeholders. We look forward to sharing more successes with our partner countries as we move into the next quarter.

Until the next newsletter, I leave you with the following quote - "With discipline, dedication and diligence, you will achieve the goal." — Lailah Gifty Akita, Think Great: Be Great!

Second National I-FETP Conference: “Applied Epidemiology: Today’s Challenges and Tomorrow’s Horizons”

In a country fraught with peril, daily life can become a struggle. In Iraq, the facts are a cause for concern: communities are at a growing risk of physical and mental illnesses, environmental hazards, food and water insecurity, and the list does go on. Measures must be taken to transform the state of health for Iraqi populations from a today that is challenging, to a tomorrow of change. For Iraq, public health has been this promise for change.

In 2010, The Iraq Field Epidemiology Training Program (I-FETP) was introduced by the Ministry of Health (MoH). The overarching goal of this effort has been to protect the health of the Iraqi public in all of the country’s provinces.

The I-FETP has made strides into advancing public health in Iraq. Its successes culminated in the Second National Conference for the Iraqi Field Epidemiology Training Program, an event that celebrated the graduation of the program’s 4th Cohort. The conference aimed to spotlight the commendable achievements of the cohort, as well as the work of other graduates and residents of the program. The event was organized in partnership with EMPHNET, the Iraq Ministry of Health, and the Baghdad College of Medicine between March 23 and 24, 2016 in Baghdad.

It was there that epidemiologists from the 4th and 5th cohorts presented the research they have done into issues of immediate concern to the public health of the nation. Their studies were diverse in as much as they were relevant. They investigated the country’s trends in infectious diseases such as cholera, typhoid, tuberculosis, and hepatitis; and they studied patterns of mental disorders in the country, particularly depression and post-traumatic stress disorder. They have analyzed disease surveillance performed by Iraqi health authorities. Presentations also covered issues of child health, nutrition, smoking, hygiene, and food safety. Their studies were of practical value as they offered actionable recommendations to resolve such concerns for communities across Iraq.

“Applied Epidemiology, Today’s Challenges and Tomorrow’s Horizons,” was the theme of the conference. This year, the spirit was high despite challenging conditions, for the work of FETP residents and graduates has, in fact, made a difference. At the conference, Dr. Qahtan Al-Salihi, Executive Manager of the I-FETP spoke of the achievements of residents and graduates. Since 2010, 36 graduates have been appointed in public health directorates across Iraq, where they succeeded in activating rapid response team roles in their respective directorates. FETP residents and graduates have participated in each and every outbreak investigation in Iraq since the inception of the program in the country. They have taken an active part in two critical health assessments: “Health and Environmental Assessment of Abu-Ghraib District” and “Assessment of Preparedness and Accuracy of PNIDs, Baghdad.” In addition, FETP graduates were team leaders for eight projects tackling different public health aspects relevant to Arba`ania Imam Husain Mass Gathering implemented in Najaf, Baghdad, Karbala, Thiqr, Wasit, Diwania and Babil. The implementers for these projects were residents. In collaboration with EMPHNET and the MoH, the I-FETP also hosted The Brucella Project in Iraq, the objective of which is to prevent and control the spread of Brucella in the country.

The outlook for public health in Iraq is a promising one. The 6 residents of the 4th Cohort are now ready to join public health directorates in Iraq and other I-FETP graduates working in the country. In reference to the I-FETP graduates, Dr. Adila Hamoud, Minister of Health in Iraq, voiced her belief in such a promise by noting that they “are the active force which can help create the change we need for our nation’s health.”

For more information, you can visit the conference’s website (<http://conferences.emphnet.net/iraq-2016>).



“The I-FETP’s impact has transcended national borders to contribute to the state of health in the region.”

Dr. Mohannad Al-Nsour, Executive Director of EMPHNET

“The Conference does create a space for knowledge exchange amongst epidemiologists working in Iraq and across the globe.”

Dr. Ihsan Ja`afar Al-Khayat, Director General of the Iraq Field Epidemiology Training Program

Second National Y-FETP Conference: A Beacon of Hope in the Heart of Yemen

When field epidemiologists manage to work in the midst of war, then, *yes*, there is hope for better health for the Yemeni public. This is a reality, as the facts spoke loud and clear at the Second National Yemen Field Epidemiology Training Program (Y-FETP) Conference, held in Sana'a on February 29 of 2016.



“Facing Yemen Public Health Challenges Through Strengthening Field Epidemiology,” the theme of the conference, reflects the efforts of the Y-FETP residents and graduates who work relentlessly to address public health needs for communities across Yemen. The conference celebrated the graduation of the second cohort of the Y-FETP and placed special emphasis on their impressive achievements in light of the escalating hostilities in the country.

The group was officially enrolled in the program in January 2014, after having received preliminary training in November of 2011. The second cohort is comprised of 11 members, 8 of them graduated, and 3 others will successfully complete the program in the coming six months. Today, in 2016, graduates are ready to serve the country’s health sector.

In Yemen, in perilous circumstances and continuous outbreaks, the achievements of the second cohort were evident. In both research and field work, they addressed the country’s most pressing health issues. These achievements have been a source of pride for all of the program’s partners, as the Executive Director of EMPHNET Dr. Mohannad Al Nsour duly noted, “We are proud to support the Y-FETP because of its impact on the ground in a region challenged by political unrest and health challenges.”

Yemen has had its share of disease outbreaks. The Y-FETP’s second cohort has helped much in that area by investigating numerous outbreaks. They were the ones to report the first case of (MERS-COV) in the Middle East in April 2014. Residents have analyzed surveillance data sets from multiple programs describing the epidemiology of priority diseases in Yemen including dengue, Leishmania, tuberculosis, Schistosoma, rabies, cancer, and malnutrition. They developed and conducted research projects across Yemen that address important public health issues in Yemen.

Residents of the second cohort have taken part in international and regional conferences. Their abstracts were submitted to the highly competitive 8th TEPHINET Global Conference which took place in Mexico in September, 2015. Travel restrictions did not hinder them from taking an active part in the conference: they insisted on participating by sending video presentations. Residents also participated in the EMPHNET 4th regional conference in Jordan November, 2015. There, they received two awards: one for best oral presentation, and one for active participation. In this conference, the projects and research of the cohort was also presented.

The Y-FETP was created with the objective to generate epidemiological data for decision makers and policy makers in public health. The second cohort served that objective by presenting much of their work to the Minister of Public and Populations and other decision makers in the field.

The Y-FETP will remain a beacon of hope in the heart of Yemen. The first and second cohorts are now members of the health workforce Yemen. Others will join too as the conference announced the enrollment of the third cohort, whose residents will start their field placement as of March 2016.

For more information, visit the Y-FETP website (<http://www.yfets.com/>).

“Back in 1999, it was just a dream, but today it is a reality. There are 15 Yemeni FETP graduates. By today, the list will include 8 more, and in another 6 months, 3 more.”

Dr. Abdul-Hakim Al Kohlani, The Y-FETP Director

“The Y-FETP builds the national capacity for public health...The graduates must be given the priority in public health positions, in disease control.”

Dr. Ghazi Ahmed Ismail, Minister of Public Health and Populations

Country Programs' News

News from the Iraq Field Epidemiology Training Program (I-FETP)

Achievements of Residents of the 5th Cohort

In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the program, residents of the 5th Cohort of the Iraq Field Epidemiology Training Program (I-FETP) completed their long-term assignment projects. Dr. Rana Khalid presented a lab-based surveillance of pertussis for hospitals in Baghdad. Dr. Riyadh Mreweh completed his work on seroconversion of hepatitis B and C among ESRD patients in Karama, Baghdad, and Kindi Teaching Hospitals in Baghdad. Dr. Mais Sadiq presented her assignment on assessing the accuracy of communicable diseases surveillance data received-as weekly and monthly reports- at the Surveillance Section, Iraq CDC. Dr. Walaa Talib submitted her study on PTSD among adult internally displaced persons inside Baghdad. In addition, residents of the 5th Cohort selected the topics for the protocol-based project and the dissertation for the higher diploma degree.

Achievements of Residents of the 6th Cohort

During the first quarter of 2016, residents of the 6th Cohort of the I-FETP were involved in a number of activities as part of the program's requirements. The nine residents of 6th Cohort completed the didactic course at the Baghdad College of Medicine. The 6th Cohort residents had a two-week training at the Computer Center in Baghdad University, for which they are to be awarded certificates after passing the training's exam. This is an IC3-level training on the basics of computer, Word, Excel, Power Point, and the Internet. All residents were deployed to work with the Iraq CDC to respond to the Mumps outbreak that affected most Iraqi provinces, particularly the capital Baghdad, and more precisely the eastern side (Resafa). The residents were requested to work on the following areas: Assessing the correlation between incidence of Mumps and crowding index in a random sample of 50 primary and secondary schools in Sader city, Baghdad; Assessing the epidemiological and clinical characteristics of Mumps in a sample of schools in Baghdad; Determining Mumps complications through assessing all Mumps related admissions in the hospitals receiving patients from Sader City, Baghdad.

Program Activities

- I-FETP Submits Six Abstracts to the Upcoming EIS conference, 2016 from the Current Work of residents did. These include the following studies: Cholera Outbreak in Missan Governorate, Iraq, 2015; Epidemiological Characteristics of Colorectal Cancer, Iraq, 2002-2011; Epidemiological Characteristic of Multi-Drug Resistant Tuberculosis in Iraq, 2011-2015; Epidemiological Characteristics of Cholera outbreak, Iraq, 2015; Assessment of Nutritional Status of Patients with Autism, Najaf Province, Iraq, 2015; and Cholera Outbreak in Abugraib District, Baghdad, Iraq, 2015.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention published an article of a one-hour mentoring of CDC Director Dr. Friedan for I-FETP Resident Dr. Rana Khalid.
- Iraq FETP completed a one-week workshop on Biorisk Management between January 17-21, 2016. The workshop was held at the Central Public Health Laboratory (CPHL). The workshop saw the participation of 20 attendees from Baghdad and four other provinces, most of whom were lab workers. Two FETP graduates attended the workshop as well as four FETP residents of the 5th cohort. Four facilitators from CPHL and one from EM-



PHNET also participated. The training materials involved presentations, case studies, and video demonstrations.

- Iraq FETP conducted a one-week training workshop on outbreak investigation for 22 public health directorates and medical faculties of Anbar and Falluja Universities. The training included lectures and CDC case studies. It was facilitated by three FETP graduates along with the I-FETP director and the resident advisor. The training was held in Anbar University during March 13-17, 2016.

To be featured in future newsletter issues, please send your country program updates to:

comm@emphnet.net

I-FETP Resident Advisor Appointed Member in Iraq's Leishmaniasis Scientific Committee, Holds Meeting in Amman

Amid the outbreak of cutaneous Leishmaniasis in many parts of the country, a scientific committee was established to review the situation. I-FETP Resident Advisor was nominated as a member in the committee. Around five meetings were held to analyze the existing plan, identifying the pitfalls and bottle necks. The Resident Advisor communicated with CDC, WHO and EMPHNET to start preparing for a workshop engaging regional experts to develop new plans to control the disease in Iraq. The I-FETP Resident Advisor also held meetings in Amman to discuss a number of issues with members of the EMPHNET team. These included the Leishmaniasis workshop that EMPHNET will support and help in bringing the experts to discuss Iraqi strategy to control the disease. Other issues included the electronic surveillance of communicable and non-communicable diseases, injuries during the upcoming Mass Gathering, and Mass Gathering manuscripts and projects. The remaining topics involved the Biorisk Management Workshop planned to be held in Baghdad, as well as the Brucellosis Project.

I-FETP Resident Advisor Appointed Member of the National Technical Committee for the Influenza Epidemic

As a member in the national committee, the Resident Advisor attended five meetings to monitor the H1N1 situation in Iraq and monitor the outbreaks of H5N1 among poultry in three provinces in Iraq.

I-FETP Participates in EMPHNET Regional Meeting for Polio

Between January 9-15, 2016, EMPHNET held a regional meeting to discuss the Polio situation in the region and other geographical areas where EMPHNET also offers its support. Along with Iraq, the meeting also included Jordan, Yemen, Somalia and Egypt. The I-FETP Resident Advisor was a member of a team including the National Extended Program of Immunization (EPI) manager and a WHO consultant. The end product for Iraq was a detailed work plan involving all the activities that EMPHNET can support. These activities reviewed are endorsed by the ministry, and the I-FETP will have an important role in implementing most of these activities.

USAID Public Health Advisor Visits North Iraq

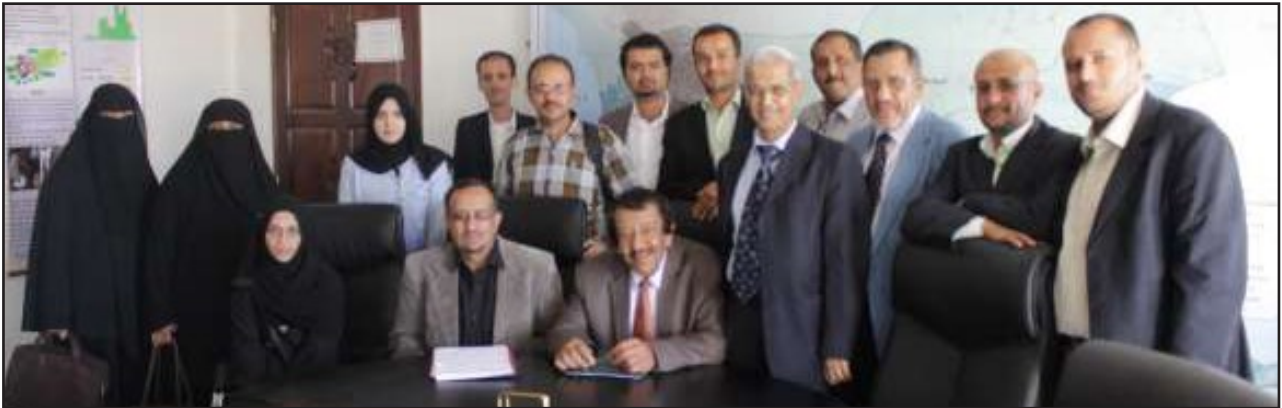
Ms. Jolene Nakao, Public Health Advisor for USAID, visited North Iraq to assess the urgent health needs particularly in the public health arena. She requested the support of the I-FETP in introducing her to public health officials in Kurdistan Regional Governorate and other provinces in Iraq.



News from Yemen FETP

The Y-FETP Announces 3rd Cohort

In March, the Y-FETP announced the initiation of its 3rd Cohort. By the end of May, residents of the 3rd Cohort will have completed short rotations in 33 of the Ministry's central programs. The purpose of these rotations is to familiarize residents with the nature of these programs. The rotations will also help residents identify the areas where they can help with the aforesaid programs prior to the residents' placement in June.



Y-FETP participated in two dengue outbreaks investigation in Hadhramaut and Shabwah

EMPHNET Conducts Trainings for 3rd Cohort

The residents received a three-week computer training in February 2016, followed by a 400-hour English training in March. Both trainings were organized with the support of EMPHNET. In addition, EMPHNET hired a local consultant to conduct "Advance Epi Info Training" for the 2nd Cohort on February 2016.

Y-FETP Attends Workshop: Sustainable Public Health Capacity in the EMR Region for Polio Eradication and Routine Immunization

The Y-FETP Director, the Technical Advisor (TA), and the Polio Surveillance Coordinator attended the "Strengthening Sustainable Public Health Capacity in the Eastern Mediterranean Region for Polio Eradication and Routine Immunization Activities" workshop that was organized by EMPHNET and WHO in Amman, January 10-12, 2016. The event was an opportunity for the Y-FETP Director and the TA to discuss with EMPHNET's Executive Director and team members possible support for the Y-FETP. The meeting was very successful as EMPHNET renewed its full support to the Y-FETP and agreed to fund some of urgent activities.

Y-FETP Conducts Dissemination Workshops

Y-FETP conducted four dissemination workshops for the purpose of disclosing findings from the Y-FETP's 2nd Cohort planned studies. These workshops were attended by officials from the Ministry's programs and decision makers, who discussed future steps and means to implement recommendations.

Y-FETP Director and TA Appointed Members in Yemen's "Zika Preparedness Higher Committee"

Although Zika cases have not been yet reported from the EMR or Yemen, WHO stressed that some countries in the region are at risk of Zika transmission. In particular, WHO noted that countries who have had dengue outbreaks in recent years and where the mosquito Aedes is present are in fact at risk of Zika transmission. It was also noted that such countries must use the dengue dynamics as the reference point to deal with this transmission if it does take place. It is for this reason that the Minister of Public Health and Populations issued a decree for establishing "Zika Preparedness Higher Committee." Both the Y-FETP Director and Technical Advisor (TA) were appointed members in this committee. The Technical Advisor was asked by the committee to develop a proposal to establish a surveillance system for microcephaly, especially considering that there are currently no congenital birth defect (CBD) surveillance system or microcephaly baseline prevalence data available from Yemen. This protocol was developed and circulated to the committee members for further discussion. Besides providing a baseline microcephaly prevalence data that will help to monitor any Zika transmission in the country, such protocol could be geared to strengthening the identification of CBD in the planning and implementation of public health actions in Yemen.

News from Pakistan

Introductory Workshops on Disease Surveillance and Outbreak Response

Field Epidemiology and Laboratory Training Program (FELTP) in Pakistan conducted introductory workshops on "Disease Surveillance and Outbreak Response" in Balochistan and Sindh Provinces, on February 12- 23, 2016. Attendance in each of these workshops totaled to around 80 participants including District Health Officials (DHOs) from all districts. The Provincial Disease Surveillance and Response Units (PDSRUs) facilitated the activity in their respective provinces. The purpose of these workshops is to introduce FELTP and its objectives to higher officials and doctors eligible for FELTP. The participants benefitted from the discussions on outbreak investigation and disease surveillance.



The Director General (DG) Health and Additional Secretary Health, Province Balochistan appreciated the efforts of FELTP and PDSRU Balochistan in their response to disease outbreak investigations. Similarly, at the workshop in Karachi, the DG Health Province Sindh applauded the outbreak investigations done by the fellows at PDSRU Sindh.



Presentation Accepted for EIS International Conference 2016

An abstract from Pakistan FELTP titled "Outbreak of Enteric Fever in Union Council (UC) Tarlai, District Islamabad, Pakistan 2015" got accepted as poster presentation in the annual EIS international conference 2016. This is the 6th consecutive year at the EIS conference where the FELTP Pakistan has an abstract accepted. FELTP Pakistan has been privileged to be the part of EIS and won prizes in last few conferences. It is indeed an honor to be an active participant in such a prestigious conference every year.

EMPHNET News

EMPHNET Participates in 7th Forum for Investing in Young Children Globally (iYCG)

EMPHNET participated in the 7th Forum for Investing in Young Children Globally (iYCG), which was inaugurated under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Rania Al Abdullah on March 16, 2016 in Amman, Jordan. The forum was organized by the Board of Global Health and the Board on Children, Youth, and Families of the U.S. National Academies of Sciences Engineering and Medicine, UNICEF and the King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Center for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID).

The three-day forum brought together over 100 policy-makers, economists, child development experts, leaders and youth from the region. It served to strengthen knowledge exchange and to identify opportunities for investments in early childhood development and protection. Furthermore, the forum provided the ideal platform for shedding light on the migration patterns of refugee children and showing the impact fleeing from conflict has on young children's health, safety, education and nutrition.



EMPHNET Holds Preparatory Meeting for its Demand Creation Project for Implementing Activities that Strengthen Polio Eradication Services in Afghanistan



In Amman, Jordan, EMPHNET held a preparatory meeting between February 28 and 29, 2016 for its Demand Creation Project. EMPHNET's project aims to implement activities to strengthen routine immunization and polio eradication services in Afghanistan, and it is part of its Routine Immunization and Polio Eradication Program.

Attendees discussed the various requirements for the project, the preparation for EMPHNET's field visit to Afghanistan, the translation of project material, and the assignment of responsibilities to project team members. Attendees also developed project study tools, questionnaires and training materials for the Training of Trainers (ToTs) activity to be implemented as part of the project.

EMPHNET Concludes Workshop to Promote Security of Biological Samples

EMPHNET held a workshop titled “Promoting Cradle to Grave Security of Biological Samples” in Casablanca, Morocco between February 20 to 24, 2016. The workshop was attended by 20 laboratory personnel and biosecurity officers from Guinea. This event was held as part of the West Africa project EMPHNET is implementing in collaboration with the Biosecurity Engagement Program (BEP). The objective of this project is to promote the security of pathogenic samples “from cradle to grave” and to support secure and sustainable management of Ebola sample collections.



Sessions focused on the importance of biorisk management, good laboratory working practices and the standard operational procedures to be adopted in laboratories. Discussions also shed light on hazard and risk communication in the lab and the shipment of infectious substance according to IATA regulations.

EMPHNET Participates in the International Conference for Emergency Medicine and Public Health-Qatar 2016 (ICEP-Q 2016)

EMPHNET participated in the International Conference in Emergency Medicine and Public Health (ICEP-Q 2016) held in Doha-Qatar last month. EMPHNET’s executive director Dr. Mohannad Al-Nsour led a panel discussion on the Capacities Needed to Effectively Respond to Emerging and Reemerging Infectious Diseases. Organized and sponsored by the Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) and the Supreme Council of Health (SCH), the conference’s sessions were dedicated to infectious diseases, disaster preparedness, pre-hospital emergencies, injury prevention, medical toxicology, Qatar’s role in MERS-CoV response, Integrating public health and other topics. The conference agenda also included two days of Pre-conference workshops and an exhibition on public health and emergency medicine which was hosted on the sidelines of the event.



EMPHNET Holds Preparatory Meeting for the Rapid Response Teams Initiative

EMPHNET held a four-day preparatory meeting for the Rapid Response Teams (RRTs) Initiative at the Landmark Hotel in Amman, Jordan between February 22 and 25, 2016. Senior public health officials from Iraq, Qatar, Egypt, Oman, and Jordan participated in the meeting. The event comes ahead of the upcoming RRTs training in Iraq, Egypt, and Jordan, and serves as a means to receive and utilize the feedback of experts on material to be presented during the training.



EMPHNET Delegation Follows up on the Iraq Project for Strengthening Brucellosis Surveillance and Diagnosis

A team of experts from EMPHNET met with officials from the Iraq Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Central Public Health Laboratory (CPHL) in Baghdad in January. The aim of the visit is to strengthen brucellosis surveillance, diagnostics, and control in Iraq. During these meetings, the delegation observed the divisions and units dedicated to the project and it also evaluated the diagnostic tests used for the project's purposes. More specifically, the specialist working in the bacteriology lab spoke to the delegation about the diagnostic methods used for brucellosis testing, while also highlighting the methods of follow up and project protocol the lab adopts for samples received from public health labs in Dyala and Babil provinces. The delegates also discussed the importance of estimating the burden of the disease.



EMPHNET Conducts Training on the Use of Mobile Data Collection (MDC) for Immunization Teams and Supervisors Working in Zaatari Camp and Other Areas Across Jordan

EMPHNET collaborated with the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) and the Jordan Ministry of Health (MOH) to conduct a one-day training session on mobile data collection (MDC). This training targeted immunization teams and MOH supervisors working in the camp. Held on January 11 2016, the training was hosted at the camp with 28 specialists attending. Attendees included supervisors and immunization team members. The training served to introduce participants to the tools and tablets used for data collection pertaining to routine immunization activities. It also featured an introductory session on the related data to be filled after the completion of daily immunization activities. Furthermore, the training focused on the periodic analysis that should be made regarding the data collected and it ended with a review



and feedback session. EMPHNET conducted the same training again between January 17 and January 19, 2016 in Amman, Jordan. This time, the training targeted immunization teams and MOH supervisors working in high-risk areas in northern, central, and southern Jordan respectively. The training was organized in collaboration with UNICEF, the MOH, and the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

With the belief that immunization efforts will be more effective when utilizing service providers from local areas that speak the local languages, EMPHNET focuses on immunization efforts through training and technical consultation and assistance to improve surveillance and work toward eradication of vaccine-preventable communicable diseases. These efforts also aim at decreasing the EMR's public health burden and improving the population's livelihood by reducing morbidity and mortality rates.

Delegation Conducts Site Visit to Al-Bashir Hospital and Healthcare Center

In collaboration with Abt Associates Inc. and Jordan MOH, EMPHNET is conducting a two-year study on burden of influenza virus infection among infants in Jordan. The study is funded by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). After five weeks of training and pilot testing, implementation of data collection commenced on December 27, 2015. To ensure proper implementation, Dr. Mark Thompson from CDC and Senior Analyst from Abt Associates Inc. Carolyn Kulb held a two-day site visit to Al-Bashir Hospital, Al Awda Healthcare Center, and the Central Public Health Lab in Amman, Jordan.



EMPHNET Conducts Series of Cholera Awareness Trainings at Zaatari Camp

EMPHNET conducted a series of training sessions at Zaatari Camp aimed to raise awareness about the Cholera disease, its symptoms, modes of transmission, and methods of prevention while providing health educators with the skills they need to raise awareness about the disease. The trainings are part of EMPHNET's strategy to strengthen its role as a technical body working alongside other international organizations and the Jordan Ministry of Health in the Zaatari Camp of Jordan. The sessions targeted both health educators and healthcare specialists. The sessions were conducted during December of 2015, and the total number of training sessions were three. During December 2015, three such training sessions were implemented. Two training sessions, conducted on December 6 and December 10, targeted health educators. 26 health educators attended the first training while 42 from the Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED) attended the second training. A third training session was conducted on December 9, 2015.



Announcement:

FETP residents and graduates, the deadline for our 2016 Photography Competition “Public Health Through Your Lens” is August 31, 2016. You still have four months left! This is your chance to document your achievements in memorable photos, to share them with the world, and to win prizes too! For more information on entry requirements, photos criteria, deadlines, and other details, visit [EMPHNET's website](#) and our [Facebook page](#).

My Experience in Jordan

By EMPHNET's Intern Nasra Said

I have always loved helping people. I have always loved making others smile. And my first serious effort at this was working as an assistant nurse, for three years, at a care institution for the elderly back home in Melbourne, Australia. It is for this reason that, after having earned my degree in science, I have decided to pursue my master's degree in public health. I did not want to be stuck in a laboratory or work behind a desk in corporate job. I knew that public health would enable me to travel the world and to help those less fortunate in some way. And this is what actually happened. While I was doing my master's degree, I applied for an internship at EMPHNET, with the intention that I could get the chance to work with the Syrian refugees in Jordan. Luckily, I got accepted!



When I arrived, I was eager to go straight into humanitarian work. I had heard that EMPHNET's Emergency and Outreach Department was working on a proposal with UNICEF to provide school health services to Syrian children in Jordan's refugee camps. I was eager to join the department's members, so I began researching and helping in the proposal writing. This is the first time I was exposed to the concept of proposals. After the proposal was submitted, I began working with the Rapid Response Teams (RRTs) Department and helped to write more proposals and other forms of documentation under the mentorship and guidance of the RRTs project manager. I believe this stage of my internship is where I learnt the most. Working in RRTs has helped me build my skills in research, writing, communication.

In January, I was informed that the proposal for school health project was approved! I was extremely happy that I could finally start to work in the field with the children and teachers. However, almost immediately I was buried in pile of work because of the intense amount of preparation that was required- on some nights I was staying back at the office until 7pm. Once things quietened down, I started going on field visits along with my team members, and I got the chance to interact with stakeholders from other agencies/organizations and members from the ministries of education and health. Three months into the project now, I am more confident in the project and in my abilities. I just can't wait for all the education sessions to begin.

I am grateful for having the chance to work in a place as dynamic as EMPHNET. The organization is working on multiple projects, and there are plans underway for future ones. The workforce is multinational, and their experiences are extensive and diverse. I have to say that team members were supportive all the way and extended help whenever I needed it - especially when I had to shuffle between projects and assignments, and when I had to adjust to the language and the culture. I have also learned a lot from their extensive experiences. And, yes, I have made friends along the way. After all, we do share similar interests!

I have to say that I have enjoyed my stay in Jordan, even though it has not been easy to adjust in a new country and to a different language. I got the chance to visit a number of places in the country. Walking long distances around Petra city was an incredible experience: I was especially taken by the allure of history and the artistry of the sites. At the Dead Sea, I had the most relaxing stay. I am not talking here about hotel service. It was simply the place! The weather, the waters, the calm, the mud treatments, and I can go on endlessly to talk about the rest! The people in Jordan have been very friendly and hospitable, and they have made my visits across the country yet more enjoyable.

I hope that, by the end of my stay, I get to learn more Arabic. I also hope to get the chance to travel more around Jordan, a country full of history and humus! Yes, because now I am officially addicted to humus!

Announcement:

Yes, it is! It's time to get creative. For our **"Voices from the Field"** Writing contest, all you have to do is write us piece about the work you have done in public health. You are proud of your success, so why not share it with the world? The deadline for submissions is May 15, 2016. For more information on the contest, visit [EMPHNET's website](#) and our [Facebook page](#).