



# EMPHNET NEWS

## Newsletter Issue 23

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

At EMPHNET, we always value the achievements of our member countries, as these milestones fall in line with our mission to secure better public health for the communities of the region.

With this in mind, we are pleased to announce that the second quarter of 2016 came with many achievements for the region's Field Epidemiology Training Programs (FETPs). The programs' advisors, residents, and graduates continue to contribute to public health practice in their countries, and we are very proud to see their achievements recognized at the CDC's 65<sup>th</sup> Annual Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS) Conference.

On behalf of EMPHNET, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate both Pakistan's Field Epidemiology and Laboratory Training Program (FELTP) and Iraq's Field Epidemiology Training Program (FETP) for the recognition they received at this year's EIS Conference for their hard work and success.

Pakistan's FELTP won the Director's Award for Excellence in Epidemiology and Public Health Response. The award is significant to the program as it is granted for practical and applied contributions to human health. FELTP Pakistan.

Director Dr. Tamkeen Ghafour was there to receive the award. Pakistan's FELTP was also selected for a poster presentation to be displayed on International Night, when Dr. Sajjad Khan, a graduate of the FELTP Pakistan, presented his study on the outbreak of typhoid in the Tarlai district of Islamabad, Pakistan in 2015.

I am also proud to see the first-time participation of Iraq FETP at the EIS Conference where Dr. Riyadh Merweh, a resident of the program's fifth cohort, presented a poster presentation for his study on the cholera outbreak in the Abugraib district of Baghdad, Iraq in 2015.

Posters were presented using high-definition touch screens for the first time at this year's EIS Conference. This digital and interactive presentation format served to better highlight the significance of the presented studies. This innovative use of technology created interactive discussions between the presenters and the audience, making the EIS the ideal platform for knowledge exchange.

We look forward to celebrating more achievements like these in the future, knowing that the efforts of our member countries will enable our region to achieve more effective public health functions.

## EMPHNET to Hold Fifth Regional Conference: Regional Contributions to Global Health Development

EMPHNET recently announced that it will hold its Fifth Regional Conference December 3-7, 2016 with the theme “Regional Contributions to Global Health Development.” With this theme in mind, conference sessions will focus on public health concerns specific to the region, particularly the high burden of non-communicable diseases, communicable disease outbreaks, challenges in surveillance systems, public health in mass gatherings, emergency response, and other relevant public health issues. The sessions will be conducted in a Global Health Development context with the goal being to highlight the regional contributions made to global health efforts. The conference will also emphasize the need to recognize public health problems in the region as a global health concern that both transcends national borders and demands a multi-national force to protect the health of people worldwide.

The conference agenda will include keynote addresses, panel discussions, round-table meetings, workshops and mini-symposiums conducted by EMPHNET and/or other regional and international organizations. Additionally, FETP graduates and residents will be showcasing their work in oral and poster presentations.

This year, the conference will be live-streamed on the conference’s website so a wider audience can benefit from all that the event has to offer. This will be a key component to the event as this knowledge-sharing tool will allow both regional and international participants to be part of the conference.

EMPHNET has also recently launched the Fifth Regional Conference website. Regularly updated, it provides information about the conference, including important dates, conference programs, fees and registration information, sponsorship packages, and abstract submission guidelines. Abstract submission is now open to FETP residents, FETP graduates, and public health professionals for projects conducted in one or more countries in the EMR. Abstracts can be submitted via the conference website.

EMPHNET holds its Regional Conference every two years to offer an opportunity for field epidemiologists and public health practitioners from the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR) to present their works. Through its diverse program, the conference creates an environment in which regional Field Epidemiology Training Program (FETP) residents, graduates and public health professionals from all over the world, along with representatives of international and regional organizations, can meet to discuss public health issues concerning Eastern Mediterranean countries.



The Fifth Regional Conference organizing committee is working hard to ensure that the event presents an educational experience for all participants. Keep checking the conference website for news and updates at:  
<http://conferences.emphnet.net/fifth>

## Country Programs' News

### News from Iraq

#### **Iraq FETP Conducts Two Training Workshops**

Graduates from the Iraq FETP conducted two Rapid Response Team (RRTs) workshops for public health physicians working in health directorates across a number of governorates in Iraq. The purpose of these workshops was to train physicians to conduct rapid, coordinated epidemiological investigations, assessments, and responses to public health emergencies such as humanitarian crises, disease outbreaks, and natural disasters.

The first training was conducted May 15-19, 2016 for physicians from the health directorates of Baghdad, Karkh, and Anbar. The second training was conducted May 22-26, 2016 for physicians from the health directorates of Rusafa, Dyala, and Wasit. At both training sessions, five participants from each directorate attended. The facilitators were graduates of the I-FETP.



### News from Morocco

#### **Morocco FETP Fourth Cohort Work on Field Assignments**

The residents of the fourth cohort of the Morocco FETP have spent approximately 28% of their training time in class and will be spending the remaining 72% at their field assignment sites.

As part of their field assignments, the residents have been involved in outbreak investigations, surveillance, and research projects which cover both non-communicable and communicable diseases and which fall in line with the priorities of the Moroccan MoH.

The fourth cohort has 20 residents from Morocco and two public health professionals from Tunisia. The two Tunisian FETP participants are conducting their field assignments in their home country at both local and regional levels. Residents of the fourth cohort will graduate in July 2017.

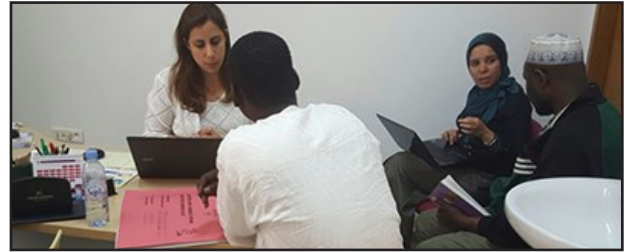
#### **Morocco FETP Welcomes Residents for Fifth Cohort**

The Morocco FETP will welcome 15 Moroccan residents for its fifth cohort. This will provide opportunities for the FETP to involve more residents of the program in field assignments, particularly in the area of outbreak investigations.



## Morocco FETP Works on Accreditation, Curriculum

The Morocco FETP team, together with the CDC-TEPHINET Resident Advisor, is preparing to go through the FETP accreditation process in the near future. An inventory of training module presentations is currently being prepared along with case studies using investigations conducted by FETP residents/graduates so that a solid curriculum in French will be available for other advanced FETPs in French speaking countries.



## News from Pakistan

### Pakistan's FELTP Participates in CDC's Epidemic Intelligence Service

On May 4, 2016, Pakistan's FELTP was awarded the Director's Award for Excellence in Outbreak Investigation and Response at the CDC's 65th Annual Epidemic Intelligence Service Conference. The conference was held May 2-5, 2016 in Atlanta, Georgia, USA. The program's director, Dr. Tamkeen Ghafour, received the award on behalf of Pakistan FELTP on the event's International Night.



Also at the EIS Conference, Dr. Sajjad Khan, a graduate of the Pakistan FELTP, presented his study "Outbreak of Typhoid in Union Council (UC) Tarlai District Islamabad, 2015" as an oral presentation. Considering the competitive acceptance criteria for presenting at the event, this is a great achievement for Pakistan FELTP fellows. It is the sixth consecutive year that Pakistan FELTP fellows have presented at the conference.

The CDC event provides a forum for US Epidemic Intelligence Service officers, mentors, alumni, and public health professionals to showcase their epidemiologic activities in poster and oral presentations. The conference's International Night also presents an opportunity for officers from countries around the globe to share their work.

### Dr. Khan, Winner of EMPHNET's 2015 Photo Contest, Attends CDC's Epidemic Intelligence Conference

Dr. Mumtaz Ali Khan, a resident of the Pakistan FELTP, won first place in EMPHNET's 2015 FETP Contest. As the first place winner, Dr. Khan won a sponsored trip to CDC's Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS) conference. In commenting on the trip, Dr. Khan noted that his attendance at the event presented an opportunity for him to enhance his experience through discussions with global experts in the field.



## **News from Yemen**

### **Yemen FETP Launches Quarterly Newsletter**

The Yemen Field Epidemiology Training Program (Y-FETP) launched the first issue of its bilingual Arabic/ English newsletter. This newsletter will allow the Yemeni epidemiology/public health community to stay updated on recent Y-FETP and field epidemiology activities. It will strengthen communication with other FETP programs in the region and foster experience exchange that will benefit FETPs and other public health programs/interventions. Through this newsletter, both Y-FETP residents and graduates can follow the program's developments and find different opportunities to participate in international conferences and training workshops. The newsletter will also feature announcements for opportunities for career development. Editions of the newsletter are available on the Y-FETP website at: <http://www.yfetsp.com>.

### **Yemen FETP Participates in National Zika Preparedness Committee**

With WHO support, a pilot microcephaly surveillance system was launched at the main Child and Maternity Hospital in Yemen under the guidance of the National Zika Preparedness Committee. On the day of the launch, the Y-FETP director delivered a short background presentation on the Zika virus. Following the presentation, the Obstetric and Neonatology department's staff was trained on the microcephaly surveillance system's objectives, methodology, and forms to be adopted. The pilot system will be evaluated after three months and scaled up for sentinel surveillance at all maternity hospitals in the country. This development could even serve as a starting point towards establishing a congenital birth defect surveillance system in Yemen.

### **Yemen FETP Conducts Dissemination Workshops**

Y-FETP conducted three dissemination workshops on the findings from the second Y-FETP cohort's planned studies. These workshops were attended by members of the relevant ministry programs' teams and decision makers as well as relevant ministries. Future steps for the implementation of the studies' recommendations were discussed.

### **Yemen FETP Participates in Global Health Security Agenda Events**

The Y-FETP was invited to the Global Health Security Agenda (GHS) Workshop held in Yogyakarta, Indonesia May 9 -10, 2016. The workshop sessions highlighted the Regional Strategic Framework for Human Health Workforce Development on Epidemiology. Showing an active presence at other GASA events, the Y-FETP Technical Advisor Dr. Abdel Wahed Al Srouri also participated in the 2nd GHS Video conference for Workforce Development Action Package on June 20, 2016 where he provided an update on the progress of Yemen's FETP and its future activities. He also highlighted the role that could be played by the Y-FETP.



## Yemen FETP Third Cohort Work on Field Assignments

The third cohort residents completed their first assignment (a three-month program requirement) where they conducted daily short rotations at each of the 33 central level ministry programs. At the end of this rotation, the residents sat for an examination, after which they were provided with an evaluation on their performance on the exam and in the field.

The program conducted eight outbreak investigations: five dengue outbreaks in Hajjah, Hodeidah, Shabwa, Sayoun, and Marib; two scabies outbreaks in Sadah and Amran; and one Tinea Capitis outbreak in Amran.

## EMPHNET News

### EMPHNET Implements Applied Epidemiology Workshop for Public Health Professionals from the Region

EMPHNET organized a workshop on applied epidemiology March 27-31, 2016 in Amman, Jordan. The purpose of the workshop was to train mid-level public health professionals from the region to effectively detect and respond to health threats at both the national and regional levels. Participants were from Jordan, Iraq, Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia.

Experts from Field Epidemiology Training Programs from Jordan, Iraq, Egypt, and Morocco presented the sessions. Team members from EMPHNET also took part in facilitating the sessions. This is the first workshop implemented by EMPHNET to target mid-level public health professionals. It served to enhance epidemiologic capacity in the region by strengthening this segment's skills and knowledge in disease surveillance and outbreak investigations.



### EMPHNET Supports Sero-Epidemiologic Investigation of MERS-CoV in Survivors, Contacts for Jordan's 2015 Cases

In collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Jordan Ministry of Health (MoH), EMPHNET conducted a sero-epidemiologic investigation for survivors and contacts of the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV). The investigation involved cases identified in 2015 and was performed in hospitals in Amman and Zarqa April 2-7, 2016.

The first known cases of MERS-CoV in Jordan occurred in Zarqa between March and April of 2012. According to the CDC and the Jordanian Ministry of Health, new cases and clusters of the MERS-CoV infections continue to occur within the Arabian Peninsula and have been exported to other countries around the world. It has also been observed that little is known regarding the duration of antibody responses following MERS-CoV exposure and infection. It is also stated that a large-scale deletion in the MERS coronavirus has been identified, and all MERS cases in Jordan of 2015 were identified as having this deletion.

It is for this reason that the sero-epidemiologic investigation has been conducted. It is urgently needed to identify whether or not these deletions affected the transmissibility or pathogenicity of this particular MERS-CoV strain.



## **EMPHNET, CRDF Global Co-Implement Two Workshops in Ukraine**

In collaboration with CRDF Global, EMPHNET implemented two workshops in Ukraine on the International Health Regulations (IHR 2005) toolkit. Held earlier this year with funding from the U.S. Department of State's Biosecurity Engagement Program (BEP), the two workshops served to enhance the country's capacity for disease detection and outbreak response.

The purpose of the first workshop was to train Ukrainian public health professionals to recognize the World Health Organization's (WHO) International Health Regulations (IHR 2005) concepts and to analyze the surveillance, alert, and response systems used in public health events. Its sessions highlighted the use of IHR as a framework for advocacy, planning, and capacity development, while serving to develop IHR concepts for further training sessions at the national and subnational levels. The sessions also touched on issues related to the roles of international organizations and networks in IHR implementation, public health safety in an IHR context, and IHR in relation to lab core capacities, among other topics.



The second workshop aimed to train public health professionals from Ukraine in Rapid Response Teams (RRTs). The intensive five-day training featured discussions and presentations on health emergencies, rapid assessment, RRTs, surveillance, and information management in emergencies. This was accompanied by the presentation of a case study of relevance to RRTs related to an Anthrax outbreak.

The two workshops aimed to provide significant support to Ukraine's public health response capability. The training harmonizes national strategies for rapid assessment and outbreak investigation by facilitating communication channels among the Ministry of Health, animal health focal points, and regulatory authorities across regions of Ukraine.

## **EMPHNET Participates in Expanded Vaccination Campaign (EVC) in Ruwaished, Jordan**

EMPHNET participated in an expanded vaccination campaign (EVC) which targeted the Rukban and Hadalat areas in the town of Ruwaished, Jordan. The campaign took place April 15-25, 2016 and was implemented as a collaborative effort between the Jordan Ministry of Health (MoH), EMPHNET, UNICEF, IOM, WHO, UNHCR, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the Jordanian Armed Forces (JAF), and the Royal Medical Services (RMS).

The ten-day EVC was implemented to reach the Syrian refugee community in the two areas, and it targeted age groups from infancy to late adulthood. The targeted groups and their respective vaccinations were: oral polio vaccination for children under 5; measles for children aged between 6 months and 15 years; and tetanus toxoid for women in the childbearing age (15 years to 49 years). A Vitamin A supplement was also provided for children between 6 months and 5 years.

The campaign reached a sizable number for each target group. For the oral polio vaccination, 13,896; for measles 13,053; for TT 5,423; and for vitamin A, 6278 supplements were distributed.

This EVC comes as part of EMPHNET's work in addressing vaccine preventable diseases, particularly for demographic groups in the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR) who are negatively affected by armed conflict and poor routine health services. Such efforts aim at controlling and eradicating vaccine-preventable diseases in the region and improving the population's livelihood by reducing morbidity and mortality rates.

## EMPHNET Conducts Rapid Response Teams Training Workshop in Egypt

EMPHNET conducted a Rapid Response Teams (RRTs) Workshop in Luxor, Egypt April 24-28 of 2016. This training comes as part of EMPHNET's aim to train qualified individuals in the region to perform rapid, coordinated epidemiological investigations, assessments, and responses to disease outbreaks and natural disasters at national and regional levels.

The trainees were health professionals working in veterinary medicine, laboratories, surveillance, preventative medicine, vector control, and epidemiology. There were 22 trainees who came from different cities across Egypt including Asyut, Minya, Aswan, and Luxor.



The intensive workshop focused on a number of core topics related to RRTs: composition, standards of conduct, outbreak investigation, and innovative surveillance and EpiCore. Other issues discussed included biosecurity in field, case findings, contact tracing, and line listing. These topics were presented in interactive activities to ensure successful participation by the trainees.

EMPHNET's training is the first in a series of country-specific activities which are planned to be held in Egypt for the purpose of strengthening the country's capacity for disease detection and outbreak response.

## EMPHNET Conducts National Rapid Response Teams Training for Jordan

EMPHNET conducted National Rapid Response Teams (RRTs) Training in Amman, Jordan May 29 - June 1, 2016. The training falls in line with the organization's initiative to strengthen the national capacity for rapid disease response and outbreak detection.



The participants were Jordanian health professionals working in rapid assessment and outbreak response, namely public health doctors, applied epidemiologists, veterinarians, and laboratory specialists. Thirty were in attendance.

The training aimed at preparing participants to detect and contain outbreaks caused by dangerous biological pathogens in a rapid, secure, and effective manner. Furthermore, its sessions helped contribute to enhancing the skills of participants in ensuring the security of dangerous samples collected during outbreak investigations and in reducing the likelihood of ill-intentioned persons obtaining dangerous pathogens from natural outbreaks.

### Stay Connected

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- visit our website at [www.emphnet.net](http://www.emphnet.net)
- like our Facebook page [www.facebook.com/EMPHNET](https://www.facebook.com/EMPHNET)
- follow us on twitter @EMPHNET
- or join our LinkedIn group Eastern Mediterranean Public Health Network (EMPHNET)



## **EMPHNET Collaborates with Jordan MoH and International Agencies to Conduct Training on the Use of the Mobile Data Collection (MDC) System in High Risk Areas in Jordan**

Following similar training held earlier this year, EMPHNET collaborated with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Jordan Ministry of Health (MoH), and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to conduct a series of one-day training sessions on Mobile Data Collection (MDC). These training sessions targeted immunization teams and MoH supervisors working in high-risk areas in northern, central, and southern Jordan respectively. The immunization teams, supervisors and program managers were provided with training on mobile technology to be used in hard-to-reach and inaccessible areas at high risk for polio and other vaccine preventable diseases.

The training served to introduce participants to the tools and tablets used for data collection pertaining to routine immunization activities. It also featured sessions on the related data to be filled after the completion of daily immunization activities. In addition, the training focused on the periodic analysis that should be made regarding the data collected.



## **EMPHNET Participates in Middle East's Regional Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction Workshop in Germany**

EMPHNET participated in the Middle East's Regional Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction (RCWMD) workshop which was held April 11-15 of 2016 in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany. The event was jointly organized by the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) and the United States Central Command (USCENTCOM).

The overall goal of the workshop was to reach consensus on actions to be taken to develop a chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear (CBRN) response capability in the Middle East. To achieve this goal, the workshop aimed to meet a number of objectives, namely promoting regional cooperation to build capacity; establishing a framework for incident response to weapons of mass destruction (WMD); supporting development of regional coordination with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC); and improving U.S. and GCC /Levant interoperability.



## **EMPHNET Participates in Burden of Influenza Virus Infection among Hospitalized Infants Workshop in Albania**

EMPHNET participated in a workshop titled "Burden of Influenza Virus Infection among Hospitalized Infants in Low- and Middle-Income Countries and the Potential of Prevention through Influenza Vaccination." This workshop was held in Tirana, Albania April 25-29, 2016.

One of the key aspects of the workshop was to evaluate a cross-border influenza project in which four countries are currently participating: Albania, Jordan, the Philippines, and Nicaragua. EMPHNET's role in the workshop was to evaluate the performance of Jordan in the project in its first year, and to compare its involvement with other sites in the participating countries.



## EMPHNET Partners with UNICEF for Integrated School Health Project in Jordan's Syrian Refugee Camps

A partnership between EMPHNET and UNICEF was launched for an Integrated School Health Project (ISH) which lasted from January 2016 until July 2016. The project was implemented in schools and Makani centers in the Syrian refugee camps of Jordan, namely Zaatari, Azraq, Emirati Jordanian Camp (EJC), Cyber City Camp (CCC) and King Abdullah Park. The goal of the project was to fill the gap in the existing ISH program by rendering it more inclusive and integrated. For this project, EMPHNET worked closely with UNICEF, UNHCR, MoH, MoE and other NGOs and CBOs to deliver the program's services.

The project provided the ISH with governance and support. This encompassed developing ISH guidelines, which were partially derived from the existing MoH school health guidelines. The guidelines will serve as a basis for developing, implementing, and evaluating school-based health services in the camps. Relevant capacity-building training was provided to members of the MoH, MoE, NGOs, and CBOs on the deliverance and management of quality school health services based on the established guidelines. Furthermore, health promotion and education workshops were conducted for teachers, facilitators and volunteers.

The project also established a digital ISH data management system in order to keep track of all ISH-related activities. The data management system will incorporate the collection, storage and analysis of data from the school health services.



## EMPHNET Implements Workshop to Build Potential Consultants for Routine Immunization in the Region

EMPHNET implemented a workshop on routine Immunization in Amman, Jordan, April 16-21, 2016. The purpose of workshop was to help strengthen routine immunization in the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR).

The workshop was implemented in collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the International Red Cross Federation (IRCF), and Ministries of Health in the region.

The participants were public health professionals working in routine immunization in Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Yemen and Sudan. Sessions included a review of key components of the routine immunization system, micro planning, service delivery, VPD surveillance, communications and social mobilization, vaccine and logistics management alongside other issues. The sessions were facilitated by a team of experts from EMPHNET, CDC, WHO, and UNICEF alongside other organizations.



### Opportunities in Public Health

Did you know that we post educational opportunities on our website and social media accounts? These opportunities, announced on a weekly basis, cover scholarships, internships, employment opportunities, and announcements of conferences and workshops.

Check our website and our social media channels to stay updated.

## EMPHNET Participates in Monitoring for Replacement of Trivalent Oral Polio Vaccine with Bivalent Oral Polio Vaccine (tOPV to bOPV) in Jordan

In its efforts to eradicate polio worldwide, the World Health Organization (WHO) has adopted The Polio Eradication and Endgame Strategic Plan 2013-2018, which stipulates the removal of all oral polio vaccine (OPVs) in the long term from all OPV using countries. This is to be performed in phases. The first one will begin with “the switch” from trivalent OPV (tOPV, containing weakened poliovirus types 1, 2, and 3) to the bivalent OPV (bOPV, containing weakened poliovirus types 1 and 3 only).



The justification behind the switch is that OPV, can result in circulating vaccine-derived polioviruses (VDPVs). In order to avert this threat, OPV must be withdrawn after the eradication of wild poliovirus (WPV) transmission starting with type 2, for which no cases have been reported since 1999. To diminish risks and boost immunity at this phase, at least one dose of the injectable inactivated polio vaccine (IPV) will be introduced into immunization programs before the switch to bOPV.

The WHO recommends performing the switch worldwide during a two-week window in April 2016. All countries must carry out the switch during the same period to rule out the risk of importing a type 2 cVDPV from another country that continues to use tOPV. As soon as the switch is completed, all remaining tOPV vials must be disposed of as medical waste, as any use of tOPV after the switch could cause outbreaks of cVDPV2.

In Jordan, EMPHNET participated in the switch on April 23, 2016. EMPHNET’s role was to support the MoH in ensuring the successful switch, particularly through effective monitoring of health facilities in all governorates to make certain that tOPV is no longer available for administration. In order to ensure the removal of tOPV from the cold chain, EMPHNET staff, in collaboration with UNICEF, conducted the monitoring at all the supply chain stores at different levels: national, district, and health facility levels.

## EMPHNET Organizes Workshop with Jordan’s Human Rights Office

EMPHNET organized a two-day workshop with the Jordanian Prime Ministry’s Human Rights Office, May 11-13, 2016 at the Dead Sea, Jordan. The purpose of the workshop was to discuss the potential for cooperation between EMPHNET and the Human Rights Office.

The event was attended by the Government Coordinator for Human Rights’ Office, Mr. Basel Tarawneh; members of the Follow-up Committee of Human Rights Recommendations; EMPHNET’s Executive Director, Dr. Mohannad Al-Nsour; and representatives of other civil society organizations.

At the workshop, possible means of cooperation between EMPHNET and the Human Rights Office were discussed, particularly in relation to health rights for children and the elderly. Dr. Al-Nsour communicated EMPHNET’s public health programs (implemented in Jordan through collaboration with the Ministry of Health) to the workshop’s participants. Dr. Al-Nsour highlighted EMPHNET’s work across the country and the region in the areas of communicable diseases, non-communicable diseases, community health, and refugee health.



## EMPHNET Conducts Back-To-Back Training Courses for Liberian and Guinean Laboratory Personnel and Biosecurity Officers

EMPHNET, in collaboration with the Moroccan Biosafety Association (MOBSA), conducted two training courses May 15-26, 2016 for laboratory personnel and biosecurity officers from Liberia and Guinea. Organized in Casablanca, Morocco, the training was supported by the Biosecurity Engagement Program (BEP) of the U.S. Department of State.



The first training, “Promoting ‘Cradle to Grave’ Security of Biological Samples,” was an intermediate-to-advanced course that covered biosafety and biosecurity measures. The objective of this course was to promote the security of pathogenic samples “from cradle to grave,” and to support secure and sustainable management of biological samples. The fourteen trainees in attendance were laboratory personnel and biosecurity officers from Liberia.

The second training was titled “Dual Use, Bioethics and IATA.” The first two days of the training focused on topics of Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS), Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC), Dual Use Research of Concern (DURC), select agents, Material Transfer Agreements (MTAs) and the responsible sharing of biological agents. The training also included case studies and interactive activities. The 23 trainees in attendance were Liberian and Guinean laboratory personnel and biosecurity officers.

## EMPHNET, Ministry of Health Conduct Serosurvey for At-risk Areas in Jordan

EMPHNET, in collaboration with the Jordan MoH and the CDC, conducted a workshop titled “Serosurvey for At-risk Areas in Jordan” between May 3 and 9, 2016 in Amman, Jordan. The objective of the workshop was to provide participants with the necessary information, guidelines, tools, and skills they need to conduct a countrywide serosurvey that can determine the immunity levels against polio and other vaccine preventable diseases among Jordan’s at-risk children. The serosurvey was conducted between May 18 and June 6.

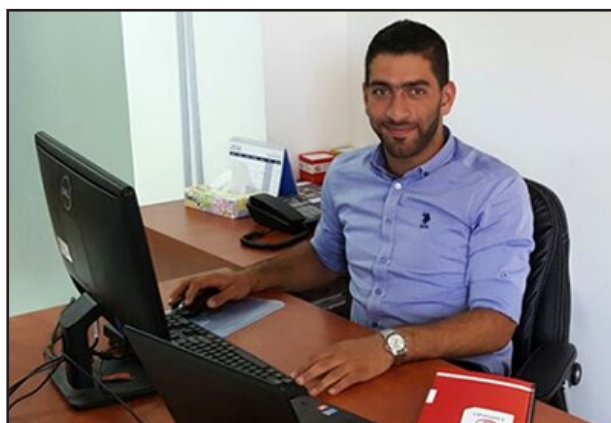
Forty participants were in attendance, including personnel from the MoH’s Health Directorates: Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI) Managers, phlebotomists, and data collectors. This workshop comes in response to the polio cases that emerged in 2013 among displaced persons in Iraq and Syria. These reported cases pose a health threat for Jordan and other neighboring countries due to a refugee influx from both countries. The workshop sessions consisted of instruction specific to the serosurvey scheduled to be conducted after the training.



## Meet Our Intern - Mohammad Asad

Mohammed Asad started his internship at EMPHNET's ICT Department in March 2016 as a fresh graduate of computer science from the Hashemite University in Jordan. As a student at the university, he was nominated to showcase his graduation project at the University of Porto in Portugal in a workshop organized by Towards a University Enterprise Alliance in Jordan (TEJ), a project funded by the European Commission. Mohammed is a technology enthusiast, and in his leisure time, he develops Android applications covering a range of interests including sports, food, and entertainment. He is also an active participant in programming contests held in Jordan and abroad.

Here's what he had to say about his internship at EMPHNET.



*After graduating, I expected to join a corporate entity as a software developer, but it was my father, a medical doctor, who suggested that I apply for an internship at EMPHNET. I have to say that I feel really fortunate that I did because joining EMPHNET has been a learning experience for me.*

*As soon as I started my internship, I got involved with the organization's Integrated School Health Project, a project that aimed to secure better healthcare services for Syrian school children in Jordan's refugee camps. I was the project's system administrator, and I participated in the process of automating data entry and collection for medical information to be used for project purposes. I was responsible for managing the operations of the e-questionnaire used by personnel in the field to document medical examinations and immunization data.*

*Working for this project gave me the chance to work with public health practitioners who come from different parts of the world and from whom I learned about experiences and achievements in the field, particularly in Jordan and the region. My internship allowed me to recognize that I can use my skills in technology to help deliver public health services in a more efficient manner.*

*Upon the conclusion of my internship, EMPHNET posted a job vacancy for the post of website and information systems administrator. I applied for the vacancy, knowing that my qualifications and skills meet the job requirements. I got accepted, and now I assist the Information and Communication Manager in software development and programming tasks, such as the ones I undertake for the EMPHNET and the Yemen FETP websites. Lately, I have been maintaining EMPHNET's Fifth Regional Conference website.*

*I am proud to be part of EMPHNET's mission in contributing to public health in the region, and I am happy to see that EMPHNET recognized that I have the skills and knowledge to help achieve its mission.*

### Internships at EMPHNET

EMPHNET offers the opportunity for students and fresh graduates to intern at the organization. These opportunities are open for individuals specialized in public health and related fields and offer the chance for applicants to participate in the technical and administrative work of EMPHNET.

To apply for an internship at EMPHNET and to learn about the experiences of our past interns, visit our "Internships" page at [www.emphnet.net](http://www.emphnet.net).