



**EMPHNET**  
The Eastern Mediterranean  
Public Health Network



# EMPHNET IN SOMALIA

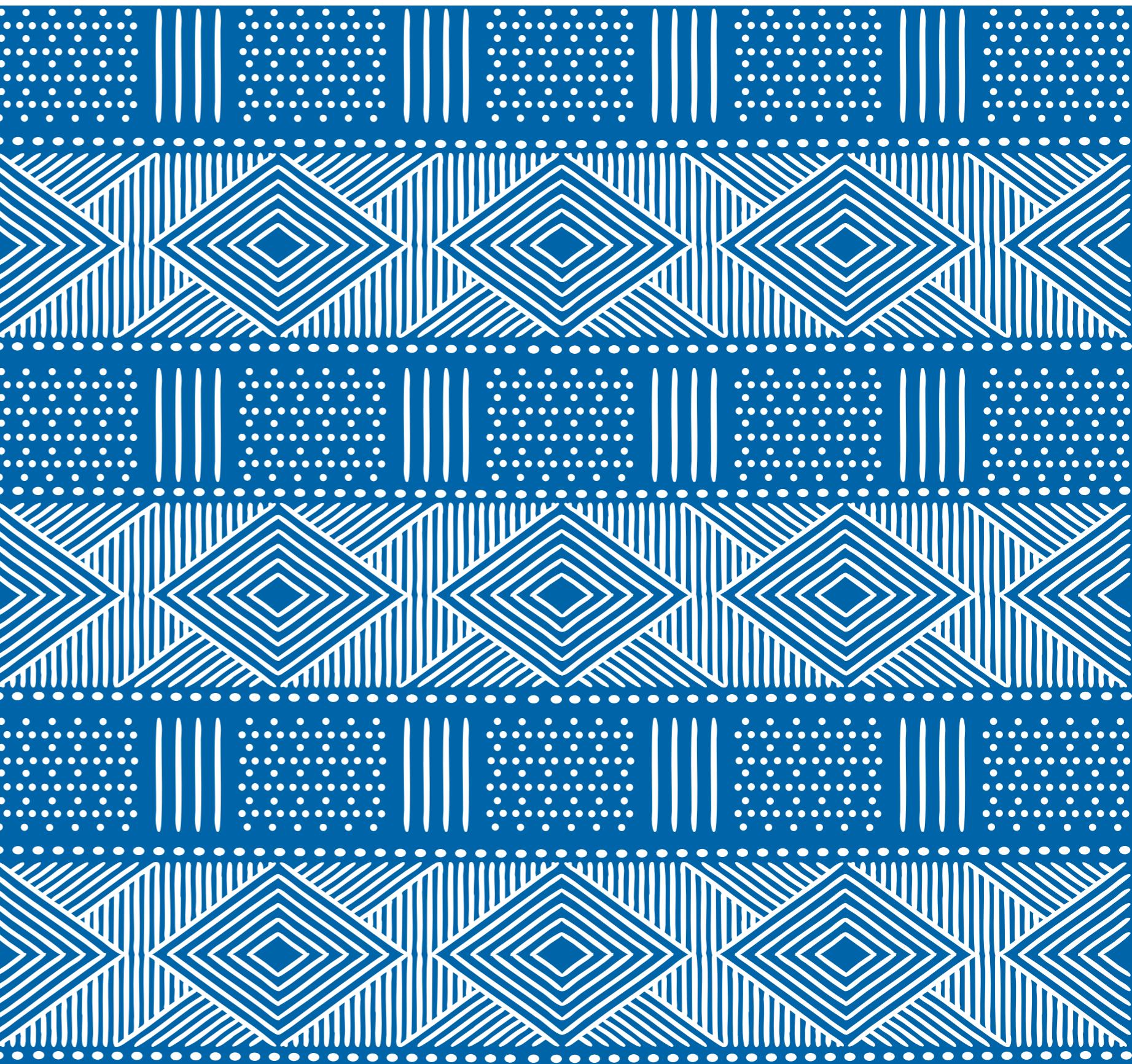


**“EVERY MAN IS STRONG  
THROUGH THE STRENGTH  
OF HIS COMMUNITY”**

*Somali Proverb*

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Over the years, EMPHNET has deepened its engagement in Somalia, broadening its collaborative efforts across various public health domains. While its initial involvement dates back to the early years of its establishment, EMPHNET's presence in the country has significantly expanded in recent years. This growth has been facilitated by the leadership and vision of Somalia's Federal Ministry of Health, which has played a pivotal role in fostering partnerships to strengthen the health system. By identifying key areas for collaboration and leveraging regional and global expertise, the Ministry has been instrumental in advancing initiatives that enhance health security, workforce capacity, and immunization efforts.



Over the past fifteen years, the partnership between Somalia and EMPHNET has evolved through distinct phases, each characterized by an expanding scope of collaboration. It began with knowledge exchange, progressed through critical emergency response efforts during COVID-19, and expanded to support the immunization program. Today, it emphasizes institutionalized support focused on technical capacity building, workforce development, and addressing communicable and non-communicable disease threats.

## **TIMELINE OF EMPHNET'S WORK IN AND WITH SOMALIA**

### **INITIAL COOPERATION**

2009-2020

Facilitating the exchange of expertise and knowledge to drive collaborative solutions for shared challenges.

### **FORMAL COLLABORATIONS**

2020-2021

Supporting a large-scale COVID-19 emergency response through the PACT Initiative, with direct engagement and support for local communities.

### **ENHANCED PARTNERSHIP**

2022-2024

Strengthening in-country presence to broaden collaborations in support of the Expanded Program on Immunization.

### **INSTITUTIONALIZED PARTNERSHIP**

2025-Present

Institutionalizing partnerships to enhance in-country presence and expand support in capacity building, workforce development, public health emergency management, and addressing communicable and non-communicable diseases threats.

# EARLY COLLABORATIONS

## THE VERY BEGINNINGS: EXCHANGING EXPERTISE

While EMPHNET's formal collaboration with Somalia began in 2020, early foundations of cooperation were established even before that, dating back to the early years of the organization's establishment in 2009.

EMPHNET has been working with Somali experts to support Field Epidemiology Training Programs (FETPs) in the region, specifically in Iraq and Yemen. EMPHNET also extended support to Somali professionals by providing them with a platform to share insights at the EMPHNET Regional Conference. EMPHNET also assisted Somali professionals through deployments in collaboration with partners such as the Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network (GOARN), particularly during the Cholera Outbreak Response in Somalia in 2017.



2013 - With Somalia's EPI Manager Dr. Othman Abden at an IHR Course, Jordan



2018 - With Somalia's EPI Manager Dr. Othman Abden at an IHR Course, Jordan



2024 - Dr. Mohamed DEROW, EPI Manager, at the Eighth EMPHNET Regional Conference, Jordan



2024 - With HE Dr Ali Haji Abubaker, Minister of Health Somalia at the 71st session of the WHO Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean, Egypt



## BROADENING EXCHANGE OF EXPERTISE

EMPHNET continued to gain valuable insights from Somali experts, particularly through notable members of the International Academy of Public Health (IAPH) advisory board and specialty committees. IAPH, established in 2022, has been instrumental in this collaboration. EMPHNET's support has continued for emerging talents through various learning opportunities, including IAPH courses, mini-grants initiative, and the EMPHNET Engage Internship Program.

### Supporting FETPs Regionally

Collaborating with experts to enhance the capacity and development of Field Epidemiology Training Programs (FETPs) across the region.

### Participation in EMPHNET Conferences

Engaging experts as speakers and participants to contribute to knowledge-sharing and discussions at EMPHNET conferences.

### International Academy of Public Health (IAPH)

Collaborating with experts to support initiatives under the International Academy of Public Health (IAPH).

### Supporting Somali Researchers

Providing mini-grants and opportunities for Somali researchers through the EMPHNET Regional Conference and the EMPHNET ENGAGE Internship Program.

*The exchange of knowledge and experience has been an expanding area of collaboration between EMPHNET and the Somalia Ministry of Health.*

## SUPPORTING EVIDENCE GENERATION THROUGH RESEARCH MINIGRANTS

To promote evidence-based practice, EMPHNET provided operational research minigrants, with Somalia benefiting through awards focused on COVID-19 priorities.

### Studies from Somalia funded by EMPHNET Operational Research Minigrants

- Evaluating the Impact of COVID-19 in Somalia: Perspective from Health Professionals and Displaced Populations.
- Knowledge of and Preparedness for COVID-19 among Somali Healthcare Professionals: A Cross Sectional Study.

## INVESTING IN YOUNG TALENTS THROUGH PUBLIC HEALTH INTERNSHIPS



*EMPHNET intern Abdirahman Moallim Ibrahim actively supported on-ground project activities and simultaneously received a minigrant to apply the CFIR framework in addressing barriers to NCD program implementation in Somalia.*



One of the most rewarding aspects of my internship was the opportunity to collaborate closely with local health authorities, healthcare workers, and community leaders. Together, we implemented targeted vaccination campaigns, conducted outreach activities, and delivered health education sessions to raise awareness about the importance of immunization.

**Ahmed Mohamud Hussein**  
EMPHNET Interns Alumni, 2024



## REACH AND ENGAGEMENT

EMPHNET implements and coordinates projects in Somalia through frequent missions, collaborations with NGOs, UN partners and a network of consultants and experts. The organization is officially registered in the country as an operating entity and continues to expand its work through partnerships, collaborations, and coordination across all levels of the health system.



*States where EMPHNET is actively engaged through various projects*

# EVOLVING COLLABORATIONS AND ENHANCED AREAS OF PARTNERSHIP

Since 2020, EMPHNET has significantly deepened and expanded its collaboration with Somalia, focusing on nationally identified priorities. As part of this effort, EMPHNET initially supported emergency response efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic. This support then expanded exponentially to strengthen the capacities of the Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI), particularly by improving access in remote communities and equipping EPI staff with essential skills and support.

## ROUTINE IMMUNIZATION STRENGTHENING

### STRENGTHENING MICROPLANNING TO REACH UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES

2024

- shield A validation tool for routine immunization microplanning workshop was held and co-facilitated by two former EMPHNET interns, targeting **25** EPI regional and state officers, along with partner representatives.
- snowflake ToT sessions on validating health facility routine immunization microplans conducted for **50** participants.
- checklist Field assessments were carried out in **16** health facilities across Jubaland and Galmudug, identifying specific challenges and barriers to microplan implementation, while also informing real-time revisions to the validation tool.

2023

- location pin **Provinces:** Galmudug and Jubaland.
- handshake **25** EPI state officers trained in a ToT Workshop.
- person **60** participants at health facility level workshops.
- calendar **One** compiled microplan for **4** prioritized districts in Galmudug and another for **4** prioritized districts in Jubaland.



## EMPOWERING EPI STAFF THROUGH SUPPORTIVE SUPERVISION

2022-2024

### What Was Done

-  **56** EPI supervisors trained in a ToT workshop.
-  **80** participants trained in district-level rollout training.
-  Large-scale, intensive supportive supervision sessions performed covering **23** districts and **96** health facilities in the states of Galmudug, Southwest, Puntland, Hirshabelle, and Banadir.

### Impact

- Supervisors fostered partnerships with local leaders to bolster support for immunization efforts and address logistical or social challenges that might hinder vaccine uptake. The program's design allowed supervisors to quickly address obstacles encountered at the local level, from logistical hurdles to instances of vaccine hesitancy, by facilitating direct problem-solving with community leaders and health officials.

## EMPLOYING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FOR INCREASED COVERAGE

2024

### What Was Done

-  **30** members of Community Mobilizers (CMs) and Community Health Volunteers (CHVs) recruited.
-  Care group mothers and community elders engaged.
-  **99** outreach sessions, **47** care group mother sessions and **25** community dialogue sessions and **12** elderly sessions conducted.
-  A Joint Supportive Supervision Form developed and used in the field activities when conducting supportive supervision for the selected health facilities in the target districts.

### Impact

- 1435** vaccinations carried out during outreach sessions, including **306 zero doses for polio**.
- Supplementary Immunization Activities supported by CMs/CHVs.
- 26,509** people reached through social mobilization in nomadic settlements, where CHVs and CMs conducted door-to-door visits to educate the community on immunization and health-seeking behaviors. For more efficient sensitization and awareness, some communities were reached more than once as needed.
- Community engagement strengthened through regular communication with community elders, promoting vigilance, and visiting around **2,686** nomadic households to deliver key disease messages, leading to increased immunization uptake and improved health outcomes among previously unreached special populations.
- Active case search for polio and zoonotic diseases.
- Ongoing data collection in nomadic settlements to map migration patterns and identify unreached children.

2025

### What Was Done

-  **60** members of Community Mobilizers (CMs) and Community Health Volunteers (CHVs) recruited.

-  A manual for community-based surveillance was developed and distributed to CHVs.

-  **428** outreach sessions, **166** care group mother sessions and **59** community dialogue sessions and **105** elderly sessions conducted.

### Impact

- 5,327** children vaccinated, including **4,381** zero-dose children.

- 41726** individuals from nomadic communities were reached through door-to-door social mobilization led by CHVs and CMs, promoting immunization and health-seeking behaviors.

- 8935** nomadic households were visited to enable the delivery of critical disease awareness messages, improving immunization uptake.



## PROVIDING LOGISTIC SUPPORT FOR SURVEILLANCE DATA MANAGEMENT

2022-2023

In Somalia, EMPHNET provided logistical support for polio eradication efforts and measles surveillance, with a focus on managing surveillance data to halt the transmission of vaccine-preventable diseases, strengthen routine immunization, and ensure all children receive vaccinations.

# PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

## EMPOWERING RAPID RESPONDERS

2022

EMPHNET joined stakeholders in the development of an SOP for preparedness and response to Polio outbreak and Vaccine Preventable Diseases.

### Outcome

A customized form of RRT training to support Somalia in addressing polio and other vaccine-preventable disease outbreaks.

**140** EPI and RRT district officers trained.



## EMPOWERING COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS

2020-2021

As part of the PACT initiative for Egypt, Morocco, and Somalia, conducted in partnership with Africa CDC, 10 supervisors trained and facilitated training workshops for CHWs in Merka and Belet Wayne.

### Outcome

CHW/Vs in Somalia were able to reach out to **20,432** households during the three months deployment period.

Bolstering community-based surveillance reaching vulnerable communities, conducting household visits, and identifying suspected COVID-19 cases.

# ENGAGEMENT WITH PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS FOR SOMALIA

EMPHNET has been actively engaged with international and regional partners to strengthen health systems in Somalia, working collaboratively with diverse stakeholders to address priority health challenges.

The leadership and officials in Somalia have expressed strong support for EMPHNET's involvement in these initiatives, recognizing the organization's valuable contributions to the health sector. With this endorsement, EMPHNET is positioned to expand its partnerships and deepen its engagement, further solidifying its role as a key partner in strengthening Somalia's health systems and advancing health security in the region.

## EXISTING PARTNER ENGAGEMENT

Member of the Gavi, The Full Portfolio Planning (FPP) Technical Working Group



Supports the development of robust, evidence-based national immunization strategies.

Collaborator with WHO-HQ, WHO-EMRO, the Global Task Force for Global Health, and the National Immunization Technical Advisory Groups Support Hub (NISH)



Supports National Immunization Technical Advisory Group (NITAG) functionality.

Partner of regional and international entities



Implements projects of immediate importance to the country's needs, in collaboration with entities like Africa CDC, USCDC, WHO, and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance.

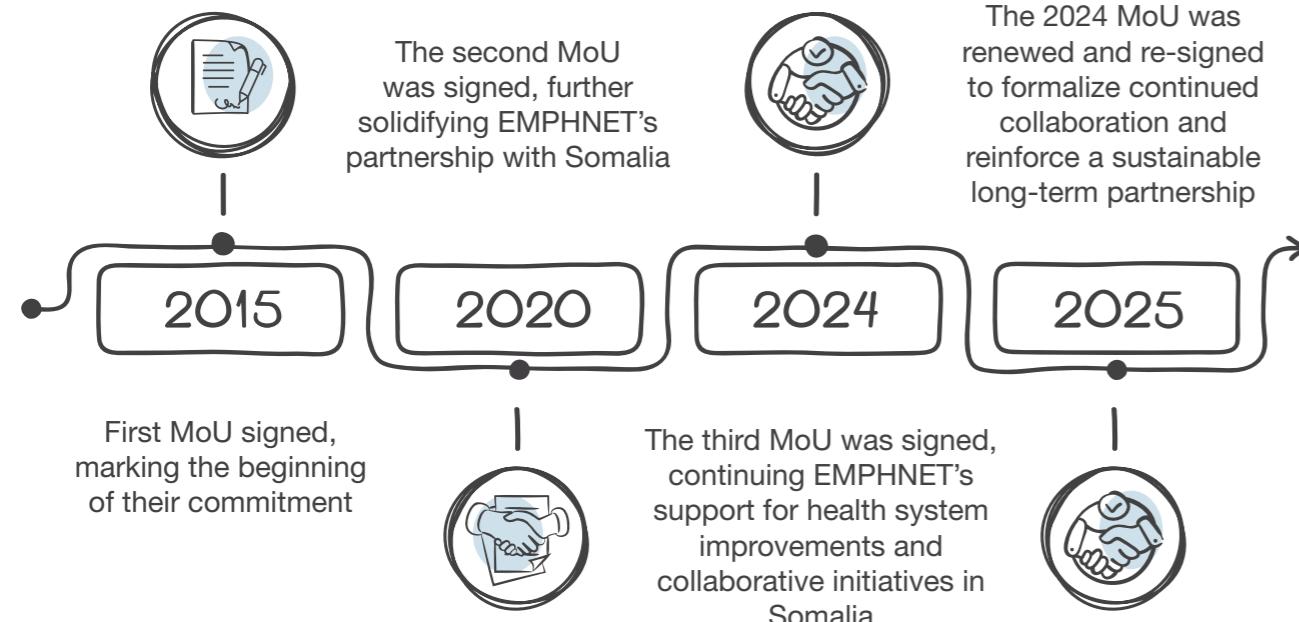
## Potential Partner Engagement



Leadership and officials express commitment to enhancing EMPHNET's partnership engagement in strengthening NCDs, workforce development, and public health emergency management.

# FORMALIZING THE PARTNERSHIP AND DEFINING THE WAY FORWARD

EMPHNET has signed three key Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with Somalia, in 2015, 2020, and most recently in 2024, demonstrating its continued commitment to strengthening health systems and fostering collaborative partnerships in the country.



As part of this partnership, EMPHNET and the Federal Ministry of Health will work together in the following key areas:

## Building Sustainable Partnerships to Scale Up Technical and Operational Support for Priority areas:

- Strengthening collaborations with existing and new partners to advance public health priorities.
- Focusing on the EPI, communicable disease control, neglected tropical diseases, and maternal, child, and adolescent health.

## Expanding and Strengthening Health Workforce Capacities:

- Conducting an Intermediate Field Epidemiology Training Program (FETP) with a focus on mental health and NCDs.
- Exploring the provision of a free International Academy of Public Health (IAPH) course for Somalia.
- Including Somali participants in regional activities such as research and scientific writing workshops, polio-related training, and other capacity-building initiatives.
- Conducting a joint needs assessment of workforce training and laboratory capacities





# WORKING TOGETHER FOR BETTER HEALTH.



## EMPHNET IN SOMALIA