



EMPHNET
The Eastern Mediterranean
Public Health Network

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

► GHD | EMPHNET: working
together for better health



OUR APPROACH



Priority-Driven Training

We design and implement training programs that respond to the specific and evolving needs of public health professionals across the region, with a focus on priority topics such as applied epidemiology, emergency preparedness, immunization, and biorisk management.



Practice-Based Learning

Our training emphasizes hands-on, practice-oriented learning that builds real-world skills. Participants gain practical experience in solving public health challenges through simulations, case studies, and fieldwork.



Flexible Training Modalities

To ensure accessibility and reach, we deliver training through multiple formats: face-to-face, online, and blended learning. Our resources include interactive case studies, comprehensive online curricula, and specialized courses developed in collaboration with subject matter experts.



Regional Knowledge Exchange

We promote multi-country and inter-country collaboration to foster a rich exchange of knowledge and experiences. These interactions create valuable learning opportunities and contribute to a more interconnected and resilient public health workforce in the region.



Sustained Knowledge Transfer

We are committed to institutionalizing knowledge by transferring tools, resources, and expertise to national and regional partners. This ensures long-term capacity building and enables organizations to sustain and scale public health training efforts independently.



WHY EMPHNET IS INVOLVED



The health workforce is pivotal for achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and is one of the SDG3 targets focusing on increasing “health financing and the recruitment, development, training, and retention of the health workforce in developing countries, especially in least developed countries and small island developing states.”



There is a renewed and more resounding recognition for the public health workforce from all sectors, as voiced in the Rome Declaration of 2021, the G20 Italia Declaration of the G20 Health Ministers, and World Health Assembly resolutions. It is this recognition that prompted the launch of the *WHO’s Roadmap and Action Plan for National Workforce Capacity to Implement the Essential Public Health Functions* including a focus on emergency preparedness and response.



The region experiences a significant shortage of adequately trained health workers, characterized by uneven and insufficient production and distribution (World Health Organization, 2017). The need is projected to be 2.1 million health workers in 2030 (Gedik et al., 2024).



Training programs for the public health workforce often lack alignment with priority needs (Naal et al., 2020) Existing training programs are often deficient in practicum experience, with the predominant focus being on theoretical knowledge (Brownson et al., 2017)





WHERE TRAINING BEGINS: INSIDE EMPHNET'S LEARNING PROCESS

EMPHNET places the human element at the core of a strong health system. It focuses on priority areas and delivers training that reaches all levels, including the peripheries. These efforts are guided by assessments and prioritization processes and are co-designed and co-implemented with official health authorities, partners, and the community.

WHERE EMPHNET IS INVOLVED IN CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT



Analysis

Priority competencies are identified through training needs assessments (TNA) and gap analyses.



Design

Case-based, competency-driven curricula are developed to meet country-specific needs.



Development

Interactive, expert-informed training materials are created to engage learners.



Implementation

Flexible, accessible, and blended learning formats are delivered to reach diverse audiences.



Evaluation

Impact is measured and programs are enhanced through continuous evaluation.

Curriculum development is done collaboratively with local authorities and experts from the region and the global health community.



BUILDING SKILLS AT EVERY LEVEL OF THE HEALTH SYSTEM

In most contexts, EMPHNET adopts a cascade training approach to allow for the rapid scaling of training programs, enabling large numbers of health workers to be reached in a relatively short time. By empowering individuals at different levels to become trainers themselves, EMPHNET helps build a sustainable system for knowledge transfer and ongoing skill development within communities and organizations. This approach also improves accessibility, especially in remote or underserved areas, while actively involving local individuals fosters a sense of ownership and commitment to the success of public health programs.

Training of Master Trainers at the National Level

Subnational Training by Master Trainers

**Refresher Training to Reinforce
Knowledge and Skills**

**Training for community
health workers
(wherever
applicable)**

as a result



EMPHNET provides support for training and capacity strengthening at every level of the health system.



This is an all-level approach that ensures continuity, sustainability, and local ownership



CUSTOMIZING TRAINING FOR LOCAL NEEDS

EMPHNET ensures that all training activities it delivers are tailored to the specific needs and contexts of the countries it supports. By working closely with national health authorities, local partners, and community stakeholders, EMPHNET identifies gaps and sets priorities. This involves tailoring training content, delivery methods, and evaluation strategies to address specific health challenges and available resources within each community. This customized approach makes training relevant, practical, and sustainable.

EXAMPLES OF CUSTOMIZED RAPID RESPONSE TEAM (RRT) TRAINING

Training Focus	Countries	Why Customized
WASH Rapid Response Team	Yemen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To combat cholera outbreaks by integrating water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) response measures.
RRT with Biorisk Management	Iraq	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To incorporate biorisk management and biosafety measures specific to local challenges.
COVID-19 Response RRT	Multiple (region-wide)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To strengthen rapid response capacity for COVID-19 detection and containment.
RRT with Nutrition & Environmental Health	Sudan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To address malnutrition and environmental health issues within emergency response.
All-Hazards RRT Training	Egypt, Morocco, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Iraq, Pakistan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To build multi-hazard response capacity adapted to each country's risk profile and systems.
Polio & VPD Outbreak RRTs	Afghanistan, Somalia, Yemen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To address polio and other vaccine-preventable disease outbreaks in complex settings.





EXAMPLES OF CUSTOMIZED FETP AND PHEP

Program Focus	Countries	Why Customized
PHEP for Surveillance Polio Officers	Afghanistan, Lebanon, Sudan, Yemen	<ul style="list-style-type: none">To strengthen surveillance capacity for polio eradication in high-risk countries.
PHEP-WASH	Yemen	<ul style="list-style-type: none">To integrate water, sanitation, and hygiene preparedness into public health emergency response.
PHEP-Nutrition	Sudan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">To address nutrition-related emergencies and malnutrition risks within the public health system.
PHEP-One Health	Egypt, Bangladesh, Iraq	<ul style="list-style-type: none">To enhance multi-sectoral collaboration and zoonotic disease response through a One Health approach.
PHEP-COVID-19	Egypt, Lebanon, Tunisia	<ul style="list-style-type: none">To support national COVID-19 preparedness and response capacity through targeted workforce development.
FETP-One Health	Egypt	<ul style="list-style-type: none">To build field epidemiology capacity with a focus on integrated human-animal-environment health threats.
FETP Mental Health	Designed, not yet implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none">To address emerging mental health needs through applied field epidemiology training.

Offering Blended Formats

How it was Customized
Blended Public Health Empowerment Program – Basic Field Epidemiology (PHEP)

Why
To provide flexibility in duration and delivery, making training more accessible for participants in different locations and contexts.

Offering Varied Training Modalities

How it was Customized
7 intermediate, 12 basic, and 5 advanced training programs launched.

Why
To provide flexible duration and depth of training that meet the diverse capacity needs of health workers at different levels.



TRAINING AREAS AND REACH



One Health

500+ Trainees

- Zoonotic Diseases
- AMR
- One Health Surveillance
- Joint Outbreak Response



Biosafety and Biosecurity

2,000+ Trainees

- Lab Safety
- Pathogen Handling
- Medical Waste Management
- Incident Reporting Protocols



Routine Immunization Strengthening

15,000+ Trainees

- AFP Surveillance
- Community Engagement and Risk Communication
- Microplanning
- Supportive Supervision



Field Epidemiology

8,000+ Trainees

- Outbreak Investigation
- Surveillance
- Data Analysis
- Epi Info Use



Public Health Research

500+ Trainees

- Scientific Writing
- Operational and Implementation Research
- Case Study Design and Development
- Research Methodologies



Rapid Response Teams Training

1500+ Trainees

- Emergency Deployment
- Risk Assessment
- Infection Prevention and Control
- Simulation Exercises



INVESTING IN THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE WORKFORCE

EMPHNET's investment in the people who oversee, deliver, and sustain training ensures that capacity building remains relevant, context-specific, and continuously reinforced. By strengthening this core group, EMPHNET helps create an environment where the health workforce is motivated, supported, and equipped to perform effectively at all levels of the system.



Supportive Supervision

EMPHNET invests in supportive supervision (SS) to foster two-way communication and collaboration between mentors and mentees. SS provides clear guidance, constructive feedback, and positive reinforcement in a supportive environment.



Mentorship

EMPHNET reinforces the vital role of mentors in FETPs, where residents receive 75% of learning through practical field training. Mentors help develop technical skills and strengthen coaching, supervision, and leadership abilities.



Master Trainer Formation

EMPHNET develops local master trainers to lead cascade training and expand reach. Master trainers build a pool of trainers and mentors who ensure continuous knowledge transfer and sustainable capacity across all levels.





APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE ON THE GROUND: BEYOND THE TRAINING

Most cases show that EMPHNET's training efforts are not stand-alone activities; they are designed to be directly applied in practice to strengthen public health systems. Examples include:

● Theory



● Practice



● Field Epidemiology

- FETP graduates apply skills by leading and supporting outbreak investigations and field interventions.



● Rapid Response Teams

- Trained personnel deploy as part of RRTs to investigate and respond rapidly to outbreaks and emergencies.



● Scientific Writing

- Trainees apply research skills by producing scientific articles and operational research to inform practice and policy.



● Biorisk Management

- Trainees apply biosafety and biosecurity best practices, made possible through the availability and use of standard procedures and guidelines



● Disease Surveillance

- Training is applied as trainees support establishing and strengthening surveillance systems, including accurate data analysis and timely reporting for evidence-based decision-making.



● Community Engagement

- Training in community-based approaches translates to mobilizing communities, building trust, and improving uptake of services.





A CLOSER LOOK

ADVANCING FIELD EPIDEMIOLOGY TRAINING PROGRAMS (FETPS)

Why FETPs?

FETPs emphasize interventional epidemiology, applying epidemiological science to address public health threats in the field before they escalate into emergencies. With a hands-on, learning-by-doing approach, FETPs are uniquely suited to tackle urgent health threats, particularly those affecting multiple countries in the region.

FETP Impact on the Ground

Based on published research, FETPs have shown measurable impact:



Enabled active contributions to surveillance, data analysis, training, and outbreak response.



Significantly boosted graduates' skills, professional engagement, and capacity to perform field epidemiology functions.



Played a crucial role in developing preparedness plans and managing the COVID-19 response.



Country-specific evaluations highlight the critical role FETPs play in strengthening national preparedness and supporting public health emergency responses.



FETP CONTRIBUTIONS TO OUTBREAK INVESTIGATIONS

The numbers of outbreak investigations conducted by FETPs reflect not just the presence of trained epidemiologists, but their direct impact on controlling and mitigating public health threats across multiple countries. With a large number of programs established and supported, EMPHNET's investment in Field Epidemiology Training Programs spans a broad geographical scale.

EMPHNET SUPPORT TO FETPS COMPRISES

15

countries

7

intermediate
programs

12

basic
programs

5

advanced
programs

SUPPORTING RAPID RESPONSE TEAMS (RRTS) TRAINING

WHY RRT TRAINING

RRTs are designed by their very nature for real-world application, deploying multidisciplinary expertise to address health threats directly in the field. With surveillance officers, clinicians, laboratory technicians, risk communicators, and other specialists, RRTs are uniquely positioned to investigate outbreaks swiftly and contain them before they escalate into wider emergencies.

RRT IMPACT ON THE GROUND

1,500+ RRT members trained to be later mobilized in **80%** of major public health events.

- Afghanistan
- Egypt
- Iraq
- Lebanon

- Libya
- Jordan
- Morocco
- Oman

- Pakistan
- Palestine
- Saudi Arabia
- Somalia

- Sudan
- Syria
- Tunisia
- UAE

- Ukraine
- Yemen

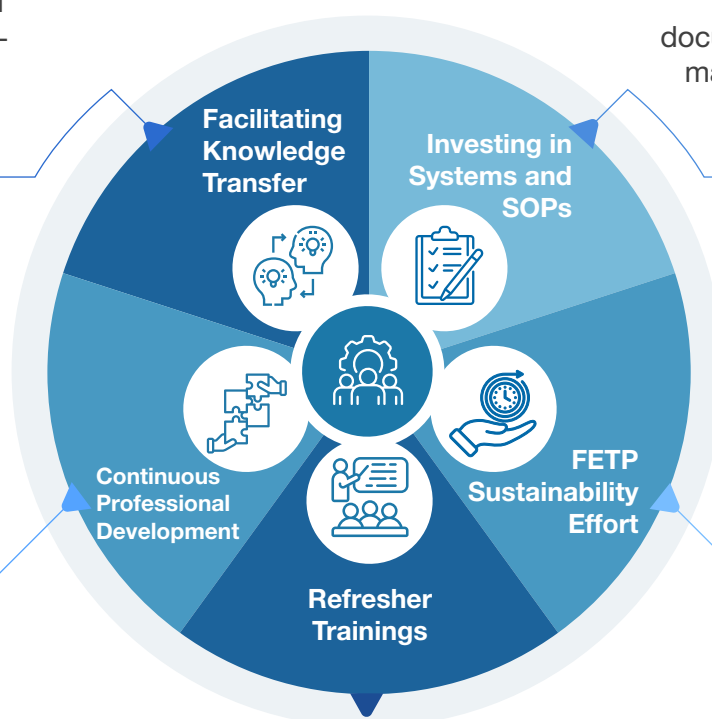


WORKFORCE SUSTAINABILITY: BEYOND TRAINING ALONE

EMPHNET's efforts go beyond one-time training by investing in practical systems, continuous capacity building, and supportive policies that ensure a skilled workforce remains effective and ready to respond over time.

Offering structured mentorship programs, supported by virtual knowledge-sharing forums and the development of localized materials.

Selecting the same personnel for follow-up and advanced training to ensure consistent growth and a skilled, reliable workforce.



Supporting sustainability through the development and use of operational documents such as biorisk management SOPs, RRT guidelines, and other practical field guides.

Ensuring long-term impact by integrating Field Epidemiology Training Programs into national health systems.

Providing regular refresher sessions to maintain and update essential skills.



COMPLEMENTARY APPROACHES TO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

In addition to structured training, EMPHNET supports workforce development through:



Knowledge Sharing

Facilitating exchange of lessons learned, best practices, and success stories.



Inter-country Collaboration

Promoting regional and cross-border cooperation in training



Networking Activities

Organizing platforms such as the EMPHNET Regional Conference to connect professionals, foster partnerships, and strengthen regional networks.



Access to Resources

Providing practical tools, guidelines, and reference materials to support continuous learning and professional growth.

A CLOSER LOOK



EMPHNET E-learning Unit

- **130+** self-paced learning hours hosted as online courses
- **6** cohort-based blended FETPs at both frontline and intermediate levels
- **13** instructor-led case studies
- **5000+** public health professionals in the EMR served by the EMPHNET LMS



EMPHNET Electronic Library (EEL)

- **24** databases
- **22** e-journals
- **28** e-books



EMPHNET Minigrant Opportunities

- Launching multiple calls for Operational Research mini-grants focused on Polio and Immunization, NCDs, and COVID-19 response, and sponsoring **30+** mini-grant proposals



The EMPHNET Regional Conference

- **800+** abstracts accepted and presented



Collaborative Action for Capacity Building

- Fostering cross-border collaboration in surveillance, threat reduction, immunization policies, field epidemiology, and research.



STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS TO STRENGTHEN PUBLIC HEALTH EDUCATION

EMPHNET goes beyond its own projects by empowering organizations and individuals to build capacity, expand networks, and sustain impact independently. EMPHNET also extends its expertise in curriculum development to support a wide range of external organizations and initiatives.

Whom do we support?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Governmental bodies✓ Non-governmental organizations✓ Academic institutions✓ International health entities
What is our support?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Offering guidance and technical support entities in developing and enhancing curricula that meet the evolving demands of public health training by creating curricula from the ground up.✓ Refining existing programs to ensure they are evidence-based, context-specific, and aligned with global health standards.

THE INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY OF PUBLIC HEALTH (IAPH): PIONEERING PRACTICE-BASED PUBLIC HEALTH EDUCATION

In 2021, EMPHNET established the International Academy of Public Health (IAPH), a institution offering non-traditional academic models that emphasize practice-based learning in public health through a residency approach.

What sets IAPH apart?



Residency-Based Learning

Focused on hands-on experience through programs teaching immediately applicable skills



Expert-Led:

With **39** global health experts from **15** countries, IAPH ensures high-quality program design and execution.



Comprehensive, Flexible Offerings

52+ diverse programs, courses, and diplomas, available both self-paced and instructor-led formats



Recognition

IAPH's commitment to excellence is reflected in its accredited status, regionally and internationally



Notable progress in just a few years
1,254+ professionals trained



WORKING TOGETHER FOR BETTER HEALTH.



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JOIN THE CONVERSATION



GHD|EMPHNET: Working Together for Better Health

The Eastern Mediterranean Public Health Network (EMPHNET) is a regional network that focuses on strengthening public health systems in the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR) and beyond. EMPHNET works in partnership with ministries of health, non-government organizations, international agencies, private sector, and relevant institutions from the region and the globe to promote public health and applied epidemiology. To advance the work of EMPHNET, Global Health Development (GHD) was initiated to build coordination mechanisms with partners and collaborators. Together, GHD|EMPHNET is dedicated to serving the region by supporting efforts to promote public health policies, strategic planning, sustainable financing, resource mobilization, public health programs, and other related areas.

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