

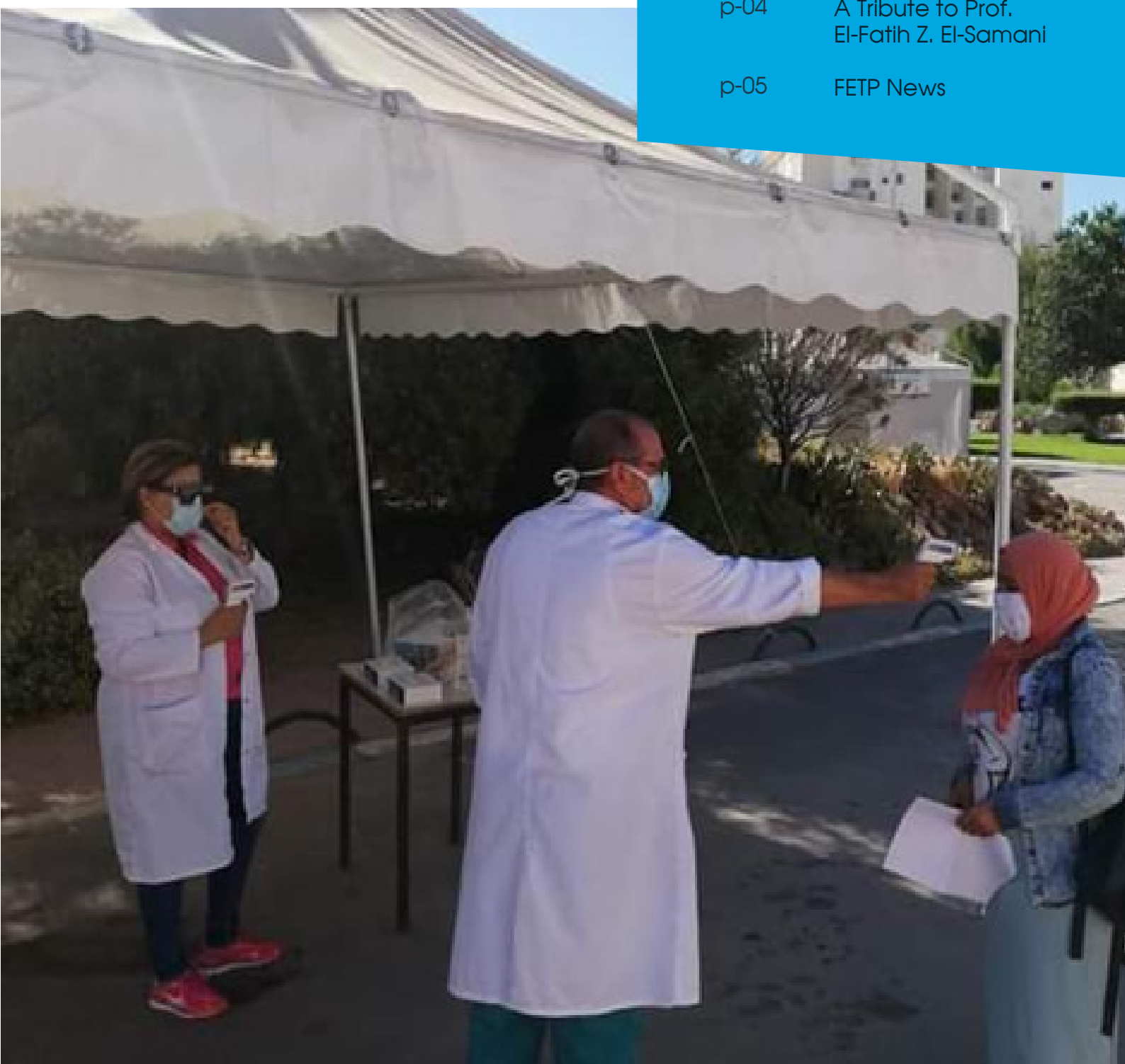
# FETP NEWSLETTER

Quarter One 2020-2021

Fifth Edition

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Dear Readers!  
Happy New Year!

We hope that the year 2021 will bring with it new hopes, aspirations, achievements, and fewer challenges to overcome. Although the year 2020 challenged global health systems, yet it was also a year filled with accomplishment for the Field Epidemiology Training Programs (FETPs) in the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR).

The past 12 months saw several programs celebrate their cohorts' graduations. It saw new cohorts commence training, and it was also the year in which FETP residents and graduates stood out as first-line responders to their countries' response efforts against COVID-19.

It is within this sense of optimism and hope that we present to you the fifth issue of our FETP newsletter. This issue covers news from the month of October to December 2020, thus serving as a tribute to all the great milestones the region's country programs had accomplished in the last three months.

In this issue, we feature the recently held Board of Directors meeting, and we share with you news from different country programs. We also shed light on several success stories from FETP residents and graduates.

As we walk into the new year, we want to take this opportunity to commemorate and congratulate FETPs in the region for all the achievements they had made over the past 12 months, and we hope that you find in the pages that follow a beneficial and insightful reading experience.

FETP Newsletter Editorial Team,



EMPHNET Regional COVID-19  
Operational Research  
Symposium



EMPHNET  
The Eastern Mediterranean  
Public Health Network

## Mark Your Calendars

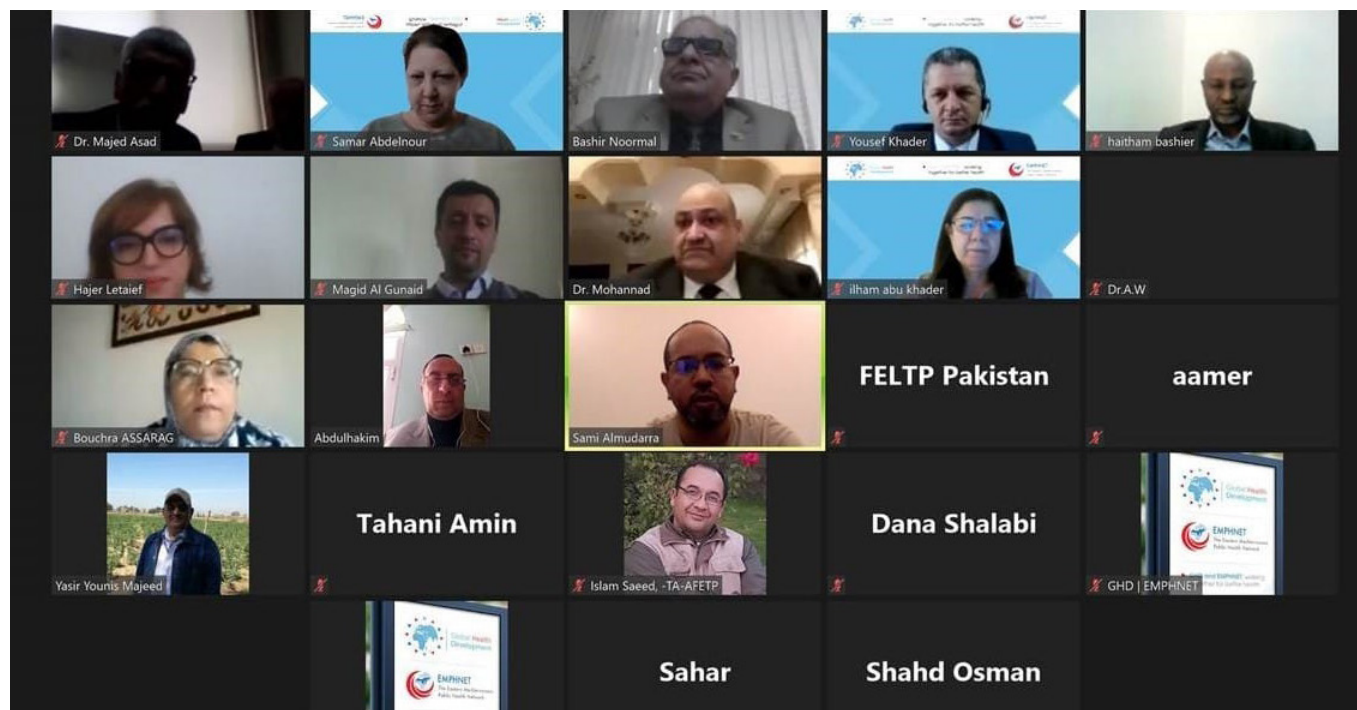
EMPHNET Regional COVID-19 Operational Research  
Symposium

**April 7 - 8, 2021**

Important Date: Abstract submission  
**(January 24, 2021 - March 10, 2021)**

## Feature Story

### Spotlight on the FETP Board of Directors Meeting: Achievements and Future Plans



On November 14, 2020, the FETP Board of Directors (BoD) conducted its regular meeting. The meeting was conducted virtually due to the restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic. It reflected the keenness of the directors to have the meeting and to ensure that business goes as usual despite the challenges.

The meeting was attended by FETP Directors from Afghanistan, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Morocco, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tunisia, and Yemen. Technical Advisors, and support team members from the respective country programs were also present.

During the meeting, the Field Epidemiology Training Program (FETP) Directors discussed the accomplishments achieved by their country programs, as well as their plans for the future.

The meeting began with Executive Director, GHD|EMPHNET, Dr. Mohannad Al Nsour welcoming the attendees. Following his welcoming remarks, former Afghanistan FETP Director, Former Chairman of the FETP Board of Directors, and Current Deputy Minister of Policy and Planning at the Afghanistan Ministry of Public Health, Prof. Bashir Noormal delivered a speech. In his speech, he talked about the accomplishments of all FETPs in the region while sharing his pride in the monumental growth in impact and the significant development these programs have seen over the past year.

He also praised the country programs for their efforts to address the challenges faced within their countries due to the COVID-19 pandemic, while encouraging them to move forward towards more achievements and development in the years to come.

The speech of Prof. Noormal was followed by a series of presentations in which each FETP Director talked about the key milestones reached by his/her country program in the past year. Such milestones included; local, regional, and global recognitions, publications, graduations, and new cohorts commencing training. The FETP Directors also addressed potential and future plans for the coming year. Such plans included; initiatives to increase publications by FETP residents and graduates, ambitions to introduce programs with new modalities, as well as plans to enhance the role of FETPs in their countries.

During the same meeting, the Director of the Center of Excellence for Applied Epidemiology at GHD|EMPHNET, Dr. Yousef Khader spoke about the support initiatives that GHD|EMPHNET implemented over the past year. He focused on the initiatives targeting the region's FETPs. Some initiatives addressed during his presentation included; the publication of Case Study Supplements, the establishment of an FETP research group, the introduction of online training modalities, as well as the publication of an FETP Newsletter, the introduction of writing competitions, and more. Light was also shed on the pronounced increase in the number of publications seen from the EMR. Elaborating on this point, Dr. Khader stressed the importance of publications as a means to increase visibility.

From his end, GHD|EMPHNET's Workforce Capacity Team Leader, Dr. Haitham Bashir, talked about the initiatives that GHD|EMPHNET plans to introduce in the region for the benefit of FETPs. He talked about the implementation of new FETP modalities, specifically intermediate and basic levels of training, more online training modules, more FETP publishing opportunities, the launching of an E-library for the benefit of FETPs, and the launch of an FETP Alumni Association, alongside other efforts that would enhance networking opportunities amongst FETP graduates and residents.

At the end of the meeting, Dr. Mohannad Al Nsour thanked all participants for their valuable contributions. He also took the opportunity to reiterate the commitment of GHD|EMPHNET to support FETPs in the region and to continue working together towards more accomplishments that will continue to improve the EMR's public health systems.

He further added that EMPHNET is using any opportunity to support all countries. He also expressed interest in the translation of materials and in engaging other countries like Pakistan, Afghanistan, and French-speaking countries to make EMPHNET a multi-language network.

Following the meeting, the FETP Directors sat for a closed session, in which the FETP Board of Directors Elections took place. Egypt FETP Director, Dr. Sahar El Shourbagy was elected as incoming Chairperson of the FETP Board of Directors.

All in all, the meeting was a success, granting fruitful opportunities for FETPs in the region to come together and share knowledge, insights, and ideas for further growth.



## A TRIBUTE TO PROF. EL-FATIH Z. EL-SAMANI



On December 23, 2020, the Public Health community in the Eastern Mediterranean Region lost one of its pioneers. It is with great sorrow that we - at GHD|EMPHNET- received the news of the passing of Prof. El-Fatih Z. El-Samani. Prof. El-Samani was known for his humility, willingness to listen, and commitment to supporting those around him. He had a genuine interest in people's health and safety, as he played a significant role in advancing public health practices in Sudan and the region. He dedicated his career to combating epidemics, strengthening public health systems, and teaching the basics of epidemiology to thousands of public health professionals and practitioners. The Field Epidemiology Training Programs (FETPs) in the region benefited from having such a prized mentor amongst their community, as Prof. El-Samani was also a member of the Sudan FETP Technical Advisory Committee.

He had always been a leading supporter of the Sudan FETP since its establishment and has contributed to strengthening public health systems in Sudan through the many key posts he served. Prof. El-Samani served as UNICEF's Regional Advisor for Child Survival and Development (MENARO), WHO Regional Advisor for Disease Surveillance (EMRO), and WHO Chief of Mission and Representative in Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Oman. He also served as a distinguished Professor in the Department of Community Medicine at the Ahfad University for Women Medical School since 2007, as these are just a few of the pivotal posts he served.

He also held several academic positions at the University of Khartoum at the Faculty of Medicine, and the Arab Gulf University, Bahrain. Within these positions, he taught Epidemiology, Biostatistics, Population Sciences, and Research Methods. During the 1980s, he was a Research Fellow at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the United Nations University, International Food and Nutrition Policy Program. He was also a Research Fellow at the Harvard School of Public Health (1985-1986) within the Takemi Program in International Health.

Prof. El-Samani also obtained a second Fellowship from Harvard's Takemi Program (2014-2015) to establish a three-tier comprehensive training program on Epidemiology, Biostatistics, and Research Methods for public health professionals in Sudan. Our deepest condolences go out to his family, peers, colleagues, friends, and the FETP community in the EMR, as we will always remember his commitment and enthusiasm today and every day.

## COUNTRY PROGRAM NEWS

### News from FETP Afghanistan

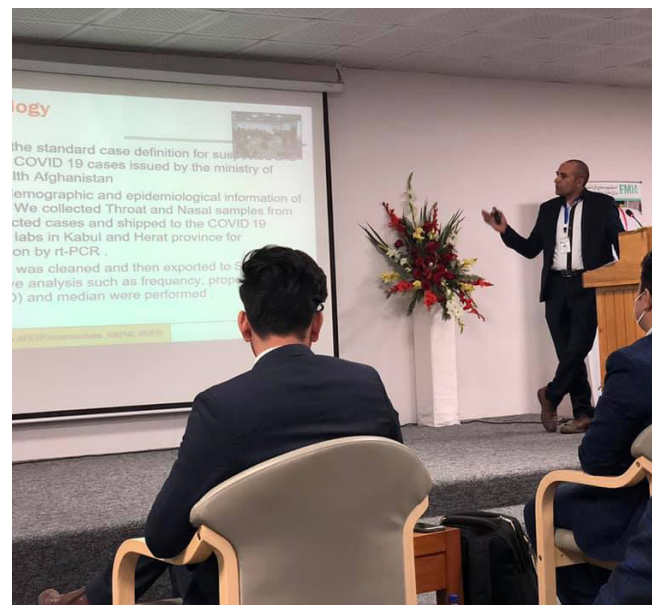
#### A SUCCESS STORY FROM FETP AFGHANISTAN

The Field Epidemiology Training Program of Afghanistan (AFETP) encouraged its residents and graduates to submit abstracts to present at the Tenth French Medical Institute for Mothers and Children (FMIC) Annual International Scientific Conference and Quality Convention. The conference held under the theme “Universal Health: Accessibility, Quality and Research in the Era of COVID-19 Pandemic”, took place on Monday, December 17, 2020, in Kabul. Due to the epidemiological situation affecting the country at the time, the conference was part virtual and part physical, with social distancing protocols practices implemented as precautionary measures.

Its session brought together health professionals, researchers, and intellectuals from Afghanistan and other parts of the world to discuss issues, evidence, and measures related to the accessibility and quality of research in the era of the COVID-19 pandemic. At the conference, thirty-two oral presentations and thirty-eight poster presentations were given by healthcare professionals and researchers both on-site and virtually.

AFETP residents and graduates submitted twelve abstracts out of which ten were accepted and presented at the conference. More specifically, four oral and six poster presentations were presented. The presentations mainly covered aspects of immunization and COVID-19.

This success is a milestone for AFETP, as the program is still relatively new and had recently graduated its first cohort in November 2020. We congratulate FETP Afghanistan for this monumental success and look forward to celebrating more achievements and accomplishments in the future.



## FETP AFGHANISTAN SECOND COHORT CONTINUES TO MOVE FORWARD

Moving forward with their training, the second cohort of the Field Epidemiology Training Program of Afghanistan (AFETP) completed its first workshop in August 2020, which mainly focused on theoretical lessons. Following this achievement, the residents then presented their concepts for analyzing secondary data available within their departments and the Afghanistan Ministry of Public Health (MoPH). Continuing with their efforts, the residents worked with their mentors towards developing reports and reflecting on the knowledge and skills they acquired from the workshop.

On November 12, 2020, the residents completed their second workshop, which commenced on October 31, 2020. The second workshop brought together the second cohort of intermediate FETP residents in Kabul to benefit from didactic, practical, and tutorial sessions on study designs, surveys, and measures of associations, epi info, and Open Epi, amongst other topics.

At the end of the workshop, the residents presented the findings of their projects using secondary data. This series of workshops was conducted for the benefit of the 28 AFETP residents making up the second cohort. It allowed the residents to engage in group discussions, tutorials, and analysis of case studies. After completing these workshops, the residents moved on to focus on their fieldwork projects.



## FETP AFGHANISTAN GRADUATION IN THE SPOTLIGHT

On Wednesday, November 11, 2020, the Field Epidemiology Training Program of Afghanistan (AFETP) celebrated the graduation of its first cohort in Kabul. The cohort consisted of thirty AFETP residents who fulfilled all their graduation requirements. Further, the ceremony was attended by multiple senior health officials from the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) of Afghanistan, the Afghanistan National Public Health Institute (ANPHI), CDC, GHD|EMPHNET, as well as current FETP residents and mentors.



The Current Director of ANPHI, Dr. Noor Shah Kamawal introduced the AFETP and ANPHI and expressed his hopes in seeing the AFETP evolve into a MSc program. AFETP Graduates, Dr. Roqia Asar, and Dr. Jan Mohd Sahibzada talked about the significance of this event to them and their colleagues. They explained that despite the current challenges faced in Afghanistan, the graduates completed their graduation requirements. They also added that they are all committed to elevating the quality of this program further and they promise to practically implement what they have learned.

In his speech, CDC Representative, Dr. Abdul Qahar Momand stated that this program and its graduates are a long-term investment for Afghanistan. He explained that this current program stands as living proof that the people of Afghanistan can have their own effective input on public health systems within their countries. He also added that it is CDC's commitment to keeping the program running.

From his end, Executive Director, GHD|EMPHNET, Dr. Mohannad Al Nsour stated that he is filled with pride to see AFETP graduates celebrate this achievement. He added that the efforts exerted by the graduates have been witnessed through their invaluable contributions to their country's response efforts to the COVID-19 pandemic. He concluded his speech by reiterating that GHD|EMPHNET is always committed to providing support for the program and its needs.

From his end, the Minister of Public Health (MoPH), H.E. Dr. Ahmad Jawad Osmani highlighted the importance of FETPs and stated that he is optimistic that the graduates gained not only knowledge but also the skills and attitude needed to succeed in their future careers. He ended his speech by saying that FETP graduates will help in the process of evidence-based decision making.

Deputy Minister of Policy and Planning at the Afghanistan Ministry of Public Health and former AFETP Director, Prof. Bashir Noormal stated that in 2009, Afghanistan only had two graduates from Pakistan, and 13 graduates from the regional Tajik Afghan joint program in Tajikistan. But now, Afghanistan has 30 graduates in one cohort. He then went on to address the graduates and say, "Although it is an intermediate FETP, with your hard efforts, you can compete with other Advanced FETP programs.

Senior Advisor to the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), Dr. Mohammad Khakerah Rashidi added that FETPs set the foundation for a more pragmatic program that strengthens public health expertise with high-quality instruction, qualified Afghan cadre, and that this program serves to strengthen the capacity of research and researchers. Furthermore, MoPH/HIS General Director, Dr. Sayed Ataulah Saeedzai made a speech where he said that the program needs to keep running for the coming years, as he explained that Afghanistan needs one program for every 100,000 epidemiologists.

The ceremony also saw speeches from mentors and current students who also highlighted the need to have an FETP, especially since Afghanistan has many public health issues. They also added that MSc programs are theoretical, however, FETPs are more practical, and the program has helped them analyze data more methodologically and scientifically and come up with academic reports and papers. This graduation ceremony is considered a milestone for AFETP, especially considering the current challenges that Afghanistan is facing."





## NEWS FROM FETPV BANGLADESH

### FETPV BANGLADESH RESIDENTS COMPLETE VIRTUAL EPI INFO TRAINING

On November 24, 2020, six residents from the Field Epidemiology Training Program for Veterinarians (FETPV) Bangladesh completed a virtual workshop on the usage of Epi Info 7, conducted by GHD|EMPHNET.

Members of the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock's Department of Livestock Services (DLS) group also attended the workshop, while the sessions were conducted by Public Health Specialist, GHD|EMPHNET, Ms. Ilham Abu-Khader.

The workshop, which took place over a period of five days, aimed to help residents of FETPV-Bangladesh build their capacities while promoting the skills and competencies they need to use the Epi Info program efficiently. In particular, the training provided participants with a space to learn how to use the tool in order to carry out data surveillance functions such as form design, data collection, and data analysis using graphs and maps.

It also provided its participants with an overview of the basic tools, techniques, and functions of the statistical data management software Epi Info 7, which is considered useful for managing epidemiological databases relating to various diseases and outbreak investigations.

The training was designed to provide a hands-on experience to its participants. In order to design basic data entry forms and analyze data, the residents were given practical exercises where they used the software. The exercises have been set up to ensure that Epi Info 7 is thoroughly apprehended.



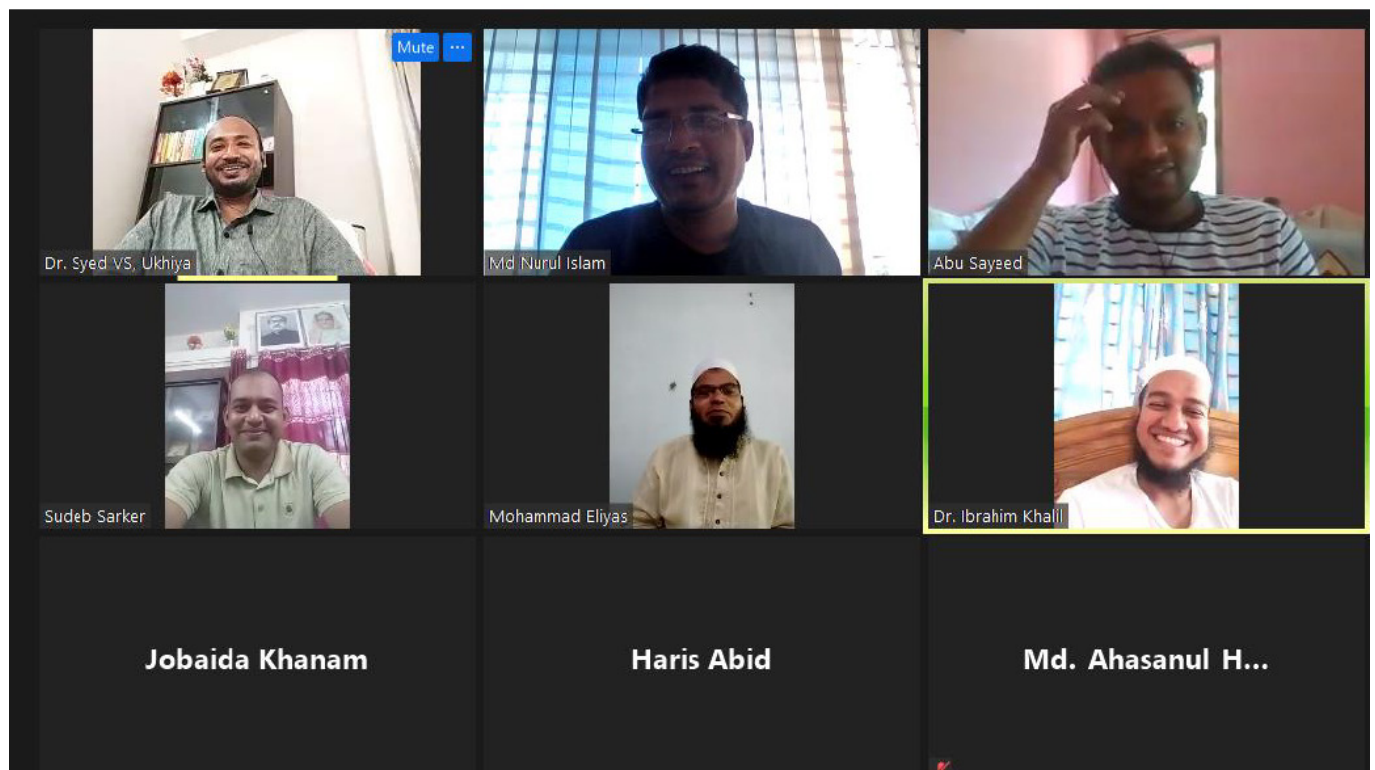
## **FETPV BANGLADESH CONCLUDES ITS FIRST CONTACT SESSIONS ON PRINCIPLES OF EPIDEMIOLOGY**

On September 1, 2020, the Field Epidemiology Training Program of Bangladesh for Veterinarians (FETPV) commenced its first contact sessions for the selected six residents from the Department of Livestock Services (DLS). The first contact sessions were part of the first module of the master's degree in Applied Veterinary Epidemiology course.

The objective of this course was to strengthen the knowledge of its participants in the areas of distribution, pattern, causation, and prevention of disease within a population and to familiarize them with basic epidemiologic tools. Furthermore, the course provided the students with a strong foundation and background in Veterinary Epidemiology. The workshop topics included different epidemiological terms, scope, and evolution of epidemiology, and epidemiological triad, disease pattern, measures of disease frequency, effect, impact and infectiousness, and introduction to epidemiological study designs.

Moreover, the training was delivered over a period of 30 days to strengthen the selected residents' understanding and learning. It was conducted in a combination of lecture sessions, guided tutorials, scenario-based exercises by using the online Zoom platform. A total of 10 presentations and six scenario-based exercises was delivered in 30 days' time of the first contact sessions. The training was conducted in two languages (Bengali and English), and the training materials were prepared in English and a printed version of the materials was delivered to the residents as well.

Although the residents faced some challenges during the contact sessions, such as bad internet connection and not having a platform to discuss or go through later, the training workshop was deemed a success as the participants attended all sessions and submitted all the work given by the tutors within the given time.



## NEWS FROM FETP EGYPT

### FETP EGYPT COMMENCES INTRODUCTORY TRAINING FOR COHORT 21

The Field Epidemiology Training Program (FETP) of Egypt conducted the introductory course module for cohort 21. The cohort comprises 11 residents. This introductory course aims to introduce residents to the basics of applied epidemiology, public health surveillance, biostatistics, and outbreak investigation.

The workshops within this course covered multiple areas that would serve residents in their future fieldwork after training, such as surveillance systems, data analysis, data interpretation, and introduction to epidemiology. Furthermore, the introductory course included a field exercise to understand the flow of surveillance data and procedures taken at different reporting levels (primary health care level, hospital level, district level, directorate level, up to central level). The course was packed with icebreakers, team-building activities, working groups, group presentations, and case study solving.

During this course, residents were placed on the start line of their surveillance project activities and were given two field assignments to conduct. The first is the characterization and interpretation of the occurrence and distribution of a health issue by analyzing surveillance data using descriptive epidemiologic methods and description of the surveillance system operation. The second is describing the operation and evaluation of a public health surveillance system and providing recommendations for improvement.

On December 16, 2020, the residents also participated in Scientific day, which was conducted with the aim to discuss the surveillance evaluation questionnaire developed by them before they start their fieldwork.





## FETP EGYPT ON THE RED CARPET OF INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVALS

Under the supervision of the Department of Epidemiology and Surveillance at the Egyptian Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP), and as part of their efforts to respond and combat COVID-19, the Field Epidemiology Training Program of Egypt residents participated at El Gouna International Film Festival in October 2020, and at the Cairo International Film Festival in December 2020. They worked relentlessly to enhance the protection and safety of the attendees and prevent the spread of COVID-19.

You can see their contributions in the following pictures.





## FETP EGYPT CELEBRATES THE GRADUATION OF COHORT 20

On October 26, 2020, the Field Epidemiology Training Program of Egypt celebrated the graduation of Cohort 20. This cohort comprises 16 epidemiologists who completed their two-year in-service training in applied epidemiology and fulfilled all their graduation requirements.

The ceremony was attended by the Chief of Preventive sector at Egypt Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP), Dr. Alaa Eid; Chief of Central Administration for Preventive Affaires, Dr. Mohamed Abdelfattah; and Director-General of Epidemiology and Surveillance Department, Dr. Hanaa Abu El Sood; Egypt FETP Director, Dr. Sahar Samy; and members of the Egypt FETP Scientific Committee and representatives from the MoPH departments.

Director of GHD|EMPHNET Dr. Mohannad Al Nsour gave a recorded speech during the ceremony. In his speech, he thanked Dr. Sahar for the great efforts she had made supervising the program and contributing to its growth. He also thanked the Ministry of Health and Population for hoisting the program, reiterating that since its launch in 1993 and until the present date, the program has been a solid fixture in the region, contributing diligently to improving public health status in Egypt and the region at large.

During the ceremony, graduates were recognized for their significant contribution and efforts in the detection and response activities against public health threats, and especially their efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic. The ceremony ended with appreciation notes and special thanks to the members of the Egypt FETP scientific committee, cohort mentors, and field supervisors for supporting and guiding the residents during their journey.



## OTHER FETP EGYPT ACTIVITIES: (IN PICTURES)

### 1. Clinical Scholars Research Training – Harvard Medical School

FETP residents and graduates partook in the Clinical Scholars Research Training which was established in collaboration with the Egyptian Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP) and Harvard Medical School to develop the skills in basic concepts of clinical research methodology and its application, understanding how to interpret and publish data, and how to develop strategies to evaluate evidence.



### 2. Ministry of Health and Population COVID-19 Vaccine Trial

Egypt carried out the third phase of its 1st clinical trial of two Chinese COVID-19 vaccines. FETP graduates have been selected to participate in the training as the clinical research coordinators for this vaccine trial.



### 3. Building Capacities of Front-Line Surveillance Staff

Under the supervision of the Department of Epidemiology and Surveillance, FETP residents and graduates participated in a regular meeting with surveillance staff from all governorates. FETP residents and graduates have an important role to play in building capacities of front-line surveillance staff in all governorates to prevent, detect, and respond to public health threats. Their role contributes to building resilient and sustainable human and health systems and strengthens the country's preparedness for existing and emerging health threats.



## NEWS FROM FETP IRAQ

### FETP IRAQ CONDUCTS VIRTUAL SYMPOSIUM ON PUBLIC HEALTH MANAGEMENT

A training module titled 'Public Health Management' was created by the Iraqi Ministry of Health (MoH) in partnership with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Eastern Mediterranean Public Health Network (EMPHNET).

This module aims to develop the capabilities of residents of the Intermediate Field Epidemiology Training Program (FETP) who serve as managers within their current positions.

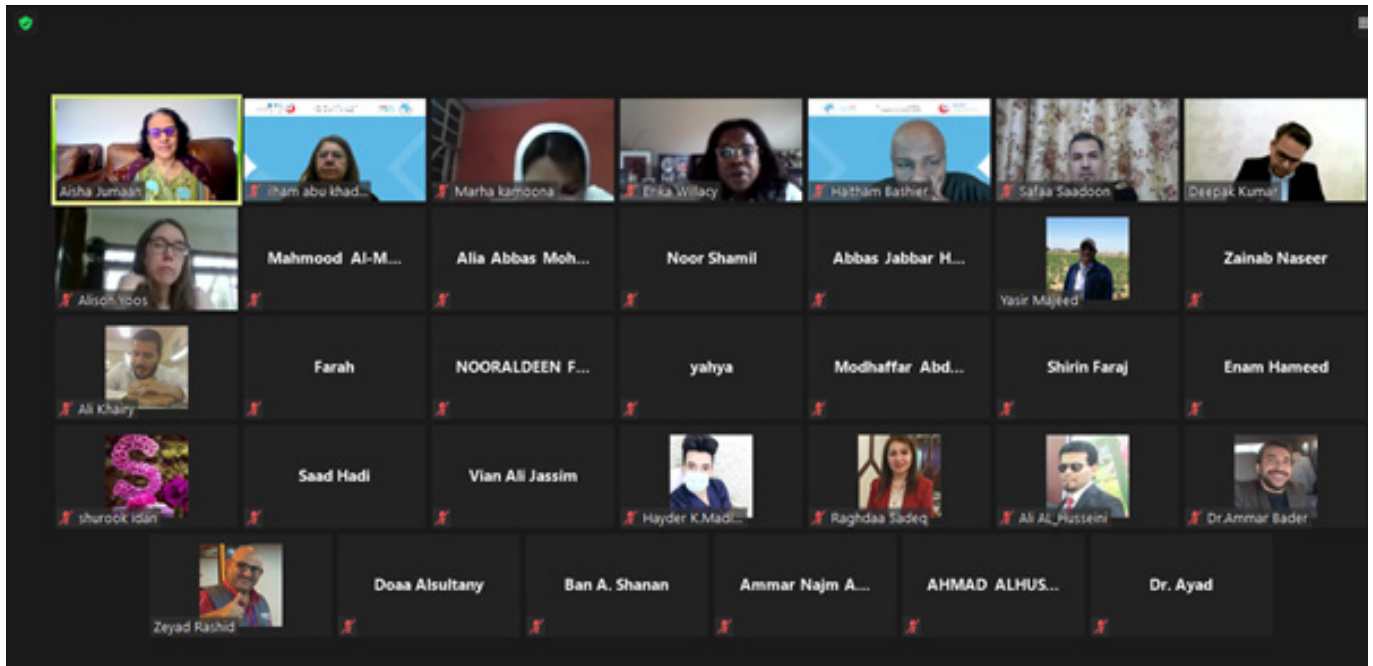
The Public Health Management module covers many areas, including an introduction to project management, the distinction between leadership and management, and action leadership, making it an important part of the Iraq Intermediate FETP curriculum.

FETP Iraq culminated the three-month program by holding a virtual symposium following the training of 22 FETP residents through three workshops and two periods of fieldwork. The symposium was facilitated by public health experts from CDC beginning on December 12, 2020. Representatives from GHD|EMPHNET, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the Iraqi MoH attended the symposium.

The main objective of this symposium was to give the FETP residents an opportunity to present their work. Also, the session gave participants an opportunity to get the facilitators' professional input and develop the resident's projects.

A team of evaluators, including Dr. Erika Willacy and Dr. Alison from CDC, Dr. Haitham Bashir, and Ms. Ilham Abu Khader from GHD|EMPHNET, and Leadership and Management specialist Dr. Deepak Kumar, assessed the work presented by the residents during the symposium. The organizers congratulated the residents on successfully completing the module on the final day of the symposium and Dr. Marha Kamouna was announced as the best mentee.





## NEWS FROM FETP JORDAN

### FETP JORDAN RESIDENTS AND GRADUATES CONTINUE SUPPORTING THEIR COUNTRIES' EFFORTS AGAINST COVID-19

As the number of COVID-19 cases in Jordan has increased during the last quarter of 2020, coordinating efforts between the multiple health sectors in the country has become a necessity. In consequence, a follow-up center was established. A dashboard was also created to provide a record of the number of beds for COVID-19 cases in both isolation wards, and intensive care units. The objective of these actions carried out across the Kingdom was to guarantee the availability of ICU beds for every positive COVID-19 patient in need of admission.

FETP residents and graduates played a crucial role in these activities. They were the cornerstones of the call center, as 12 residents and graduates served in the center on a 24-hours scheduled program.

The roles they played included monitoring the number of daily cases of COVID-19, the number of recovered cases, and the number of patients admitted to isolation beds per day, the number of those admitted to the intermediate and intensive care units, as well as those who needed ventilators.

The residents and graduates were also responsible for updating the occupancy rates in all COVID-19 accredited hospitals, periodically, and around the clock. Furthermore, they coordinated with paramedical workers to ensure the secure transfer of COVID-19 patients according to their health status to the vacant beds and according to the key dashboard. They also ensured that every COVID-19 patient received the appropriate and necessary medical care treatment according to their health status, the development of their health condition, and their date of recovery.





## NEWS FROM FETP MOROCCO

### FETP MOROCCO SITS FOR A VIRTUAL MENTORSHIP WORKSHOP

On December 17, 2020, the Field Epidemiology Training Program of Morocco held a virtual mentorship workshop. The workshop was attended by fourteen participants including FETP Morocco resident advisor, mentors, coordinators, and members of the program's IT team. At the start of the session, FETP Morocco Director, Dr. Hassan Chrifi welcomed the participants and wished them good luck in their mentorship journey.

During this workshop, the participants were introduced to the Public Health Empowerment Program- Basic Field Epidemiology (PHEP-BFE) three-month online course. They also discussed the objectives of the PHEP-BFE course and the importance of e-learning during the COVID-19 era. Finally, they were also introduced to the e-learning platform and their roles as mentors.



## FETP MOROCCO RESPONDS TO COVID-19 (IN PICTURES)

Since the start of the pandemic, FETP Morocco has been actively supporting the Moroccan MoH in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. The residents and graduates have been working on developing and updating the national preparedness plan of the country. They also have been involved in multiple activities including contact tracing, surveillance, Points of Entry (PoEs), Standard Operation Procedures (SOPs), data entry, data collection, data management, and Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) training for health workers and health care staffs at hospitals.

The residents and graduates also played an important role in the reinforcement of public health services and health observatories to carry out local public health actions. They helped in strengthening the capacity of regional laboratories and supported the central epidemiological surveillance service to be fully functional. Furthermore, they participated in regular monitoring and evaluation of epidemiological surveillance systems.



## NEWS FROM FELTP PAKISTAN

### FELTP PAKISTAN COMMENCES THE SECOND CONTACT SESSION OF ITS 12TH COHORT

From November 30 to December 24, 2020, the second contact session was held for the Field Epidemiology and Laboratory Training Program (FELTP) of Pakistan residents of the 12th cohort.

Due to the current COVID-19 situation, the cohort was divided into two groups for this contact session. The first group attended the session from November 30 to December 11, and the second group joined on December 14 and completed it on December 24, 2020. During the session, the residents shared their progress and discussed their next steps.

## FELTP PAKISTAN CONDUCTS TRAINING FOR FRONT-LINE HEALTH WORKERS

The Field Epidemiology and Laboratory Training Program (FELTP) of Pakistan with the support of the Health Department and the Balochistan Rural Support Program (BRSP) conducted a series of training sessions for front-line health workers. The objective of this training is to build the capacity of Balochistan's Health Department to tackle and respond to COVID-19.

The training was delivered by FELTP graduates and alumni and was held at City Hall. To date, 1784 participants have received training. The topics covered during this session included; an introduction to COVID-19, Corona Virus and its epidemiology, the importance of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), PPE and its role on Infection Prevention and Control (IPC), types of PPE, donning and doffing, safe disposal of used PPE, Tracing, Testing and Quarantine (TTQ), and contact tracing.



### FELTP Pakistan Outbreak Investigation Activities:

1. Outbreak investigation of COVID-19 at multiple districts
2. Outbreak investigation of Dengue Fever at District East-Karachi
3. Outbreak investigation of Cutaneous Anthrax Case Investigation at Village Shin Kot UC Inayat Qilla, District Bajaur- Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
4. Outbreak investigation of Measles at UC-4 Gujro-Karachi
5. Outbreak investigation of Diphtheria at Village Lala Ceena, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
6. Outbreak investigation of a Foodborne illness at District Tharparkar-Sindh

## A SUCCESS STORY FROM PAKISTAN - TEPHINET ACKNOWLEDGES THE EFFORTS OF DR. MUMTAZ ALI KHAN

The Global Network of Field Epidemiology Training Programs TEPHINET acknowledged the efforts of Senior Scientific Officer and Field Epidemiologist with the Field Epidemiology and Disease Surveillance Division of the National Institute of Health (NIH) in Islamabad, Dr. Mumtaz Ali Khan. Dr. Khan works as the coordinator of the Field Epidemiology and Laboratory Training Program of Pakistan (FELTP) as well as the national focal person for the Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) program.



Dr. Khan played a key role in his country's efforts responding to COVID-19, he led a team in setting up COVID-19 screening and referral mechanisms at all international airports and ground crossings in Pakistan; five big airports and four main ground crossings across the country. His team and himself were given 15 days to make all of the arrangements on the ground, they had to work with many stakeholders and to get them all together on one page, and they faced several obstacles on their journey to accomplish this mission.



## FELTP PAKISTAN HALL OF FAME

### • Dr. Adnan Tariq (Fellow 12th Cohort)

Dr. Tariq received endorsement from TEPHINET. His project was approved for the TEPHINET mini-grant titled; Assessment of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) related SARS-COV 2 infection among the health care workers in COVID-19 isolation wards of major hospitals of district Peshawar in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, Pakistan.

## NEWS FROM FETP SAUDI ARABIA

### FETP SAUDI ARABIA PUBLISHES BOOK OF ALUMNI

The Field Epidemiology Training Program of Saudi Arabia released a publication, titled Makers of Field Epidemiology, to show appreciation and recognition of the efforts made by the current and previous FETP Presidents, Graduates, Mentors, and Contributors since the establishment of the program in 1987.

This publication aims to shed light on the achievements of those who graduated and worked in the Saudi FETP, while also showcasing the various positions and accomplishments of some FETP graduates.

You can read more [here](#).



## FETP SAUDI ARABIA DISSEMINATES INFORMATION

During this quarter, Saudi Arabia's Field Epidemiology Training Program published three Monthly Epidemiology Reports, which shared the distribution of diseases by region, distribution of diseases by demographics (gender, age, nationality), and the national surveillance data trends with disease rates.

You can check October's, November's, and December's Epidemiology reports [here](#):

## NEWS FROM FETP SUDAN

### FETP SUDAN CONDUCTS FIRST ORIENTATION WORKSHOP FOR FIELD SUPERVISORS OF THE SECOND COHORT

On December 18, 2020, the Field Epidemiology Training Program of Sudan (SFETP) held the first orientation workshop for field supervisors of its second cohort. The workshop was organized by the Federal Ministry of Health. Field supervisors from eight different states across Sudan joined the workshop.

Represented states included Red Sea, River Nile, AlGadarif, Blue Nile, West Kordofan, West, East, and South Darfur. The workshop was facilitated by the Health Emergencies and Epidemic Control Director and Sudan FETP Director, Dr. Tahani Al Amin; Senior Epidemiologist, Dr. Hassan Al Bushra; and SFETP Technical Advisor, Dr. Shahd Osman; Emergencies Consultant, Dr. Babiker Al Magboul; and Health Emergencies and Epidemiological Control Co. Director, Dr. Muntasir Osman.



## FETP SUDAN SECOND COHORT COMPLETES THE FIRST SEMESTER OF IN-CLASS MODULES

In September 2020, the Field Epidemiology Training Program of Sudan (SFETP) launched its second cohort, which consists of 10 residents in nine different states. The residents have completed five in-class modules of the first semester. Epidemiology, facilitated by Prof. Elfatih Elsamani; Basic Biostatistics, facilitated by Dr. Sara Faisal; and Research Methods by Prof. Attia Zeinalabdin; Surveillance and Outbreak Investigation, facilitated by Dr. Hassan Elbushra; and Scientific writing and communication skills, facilitated by Dr. Sara Lavinia Brair and Dr. Elfatih Malik.

After completing their first semester on December 11, 2020, the residents sat for their written exams and returned to their states to start their first fieldwork.



## SPOTLIGHT ON FETP SUDAN RESIDENTS PARTICIPATING IN THE OUTBREAK INVESTIGATION OF VIRAL HEMORRHAGIC FEVER (VHF) IN NORTHERN STATE

The Northern State in Sudan has seen a rise in the number of febrile patients visiting health facilities during October 2020, some with bleeding. Three residents of the Field Epidemiology Training Program of Sudan were mobilized to the Northern State to conduct a surveillance system assessment at the local level and support the State Ministry of Health in detecting and controlling the outbreak. This decision was made to ensure the residents get a first-hand experience.

The three residents, namely Fatima Mohamed, Eitimid Kamal, and Sabir Ali, completed a period of five working days, from November 7 to November 13, 2020. During this period, they visited two localities and the State Ministry of Health in Dungula, Meroqe, and Eldaba. The residents were supervised by Dr. Omer Mekki. They also visited the emergency department at the two localities and collected information regarding outbreak response, focusing on the role of the surveillance system and case detection, while also noting the interventions implemented and identifying gaps. In the two localities, the residents visited hospitals and health facilities and reviewed reports of Viral Hemorrhagic Fever (VHF) diagnosed patients.

Moreover, the residents conducted interviews with local surveillance officers, the Executive Director at Merowe, and the General Director at the state Ministry of Health in Dungula. At the end of their visit, residents made recommendations to strengthen the overall surveillance system in order to prevent and control a potential future outbreak.

The recommendations included:

1. Improving the quality of the surveillance system at the sentinel sites, specifically the registration tools and distributions of notifiable diseases.
2. Establishing a surveillance unit at the points of entry in the Northern state.
3. Ensuring that laboratory samples must be taken accurately following the standard operating procedures.
4. Vector surveillance is instrumental for the detection and control of VHF.
5. Engagement of veterinarian activities to ensure a multisectoral and one health approach is pivotal.



## SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS FROM FETP SUDAN'S FIRST COHORT

### THE BEGINNINGS

The Field Epidemiology Training Program of Sudan (SFETP) was established by the Federal Ministry of Health (FMoH), in collaboration with GHD|EMPHNET. This is a two-year program designed to enhance the capacities of the national health workforce in applied epidemiology and public health practice.

FETP Sudan's first cohort was launched in October 2017 and comprised 14 doctors and public health officers. After the graduation of each cohort, an evaluation is made to understand how well it achieved its goals, the challenges the program faced, and what could be improved.

### THE TRAINING

By attending all the workshops and the research project discussion, the residents demonstrated their seriousness and commitment. The evaluation of their fieldwork was based on field reports marked by field supervisors and oral presentations by FETP residents, which were reviewed in the workshop by a panel of examiners.



All 14 residents investigated and participated in outbreak investigations, such as the Measles outbreak investigation in River Nile state, Malaria outbreak in Khartoum state, and Chikungunya Outbreak in West Darfur state, Chikungunya Outbreak in Red Sea State. Other outbreak investigations included Chikungunya Outbreak in Kassala state, Scabies in Khartoum state, Whooping Cough in West Darfur, and Mass Hysteria at a school in White Nile State.

### THE CONFERENCES

Some residents attended conferences, such as the Second International Meeting of the Pan-African Rabies Control (PARACON) that was held in September 2017 in South Africa. They also facilitated workshops, other than the program's workshops. These workshops covered the following topics: Cholera Rapid Response Training (RRT) Course, Training on Surveillance for Sentinel Sites, and Health Education in Refugee Camps, A protocol for the Diagnosis and Treatment of Acute Watery Diarrhea, Standard Case Definition and Infection Control, and Case Definitions Workshop.

The residents also conducted and participated in other activities. For example, FETP resident, Mohamed Abdullah presented a lecture to raise awareness on Chikungunya at Al Zaiem Alazhari University within their "health week" activities, at Khartoum Bahri.

### THE CHALLENGES

Moreover, the program and the residents faced multiple challenges that included the shortage of qualified personnel to supervise residents in remote areas, limited resources and the instability all over the country during the revolution period, limitations in using the e-portfolio for following up residents during fieldwork, and effectively mobilizing residents to areas of outbreaks in different states.





## NEWS FROM FETP TUNISIA

### FETP TUNISIA'S COVID-19 RESPONSE EFFORTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Since the start of the worldwide pandemic of COVID-19, the graduates and residents of the Field Epidemiology Training Program of Tunisia have been actively involved in the COVID-19 response activities. The graduates and residents have been participating in coordination, planning, and monitoring activities.

The residents were also involved in the process of data collection and data management. They developed Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). Moreover, the residents and graduates played a crucial role in the activation and adaptation of the national preparedness and response plan of Tunisia.

Adding to their efforts, they also participated in risk communication, community engagement, and health education activities. In the field, they took part in surveillance, case investigation, and contact tracing activities. They also supported Points of Entry (PoEs) surveillance at airports and border crossings.

From another end, the residents conducted Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) training for healthcare workers and health staff in health facilities. They also participated in the investigation of clusters in occupational settings and conducted a population-based-seroepidemiological survey in Grand Tunis, Kebil, and Djerba.

The graduates, working in the regional health directorates also sat for a virtual meeting.

The objective of this meeting was to follow up on COVID-19 surveillance and management activities in Tunisia. The meeting was attended by the General Director of the National Observatory of New and Emerging Diseases (ONMNE) and Director of FETP Tunisia, Dr. Nissaf Bouafif.



## SUCCESS STORY FROM FETP TUNISIA

The Tunisia Field Epidemiology Training Program (FETPs) is a one-year training program that aims to increase the epidemiologic capacity of public health workers to detect and respond to different health threats in their countries. To ensure the country meets the surveillance and response requirements, the FETP's curricula were developed to strengthen and improve countries' public health systems and develop the technical skills of public health workers.

Many FETP graduates in the region are actively involved in their countries' disease response activities and are contributing effectively to their countries' health systems.

An example of the active participation of FETP graduates is Cohort Two Graduate of FETP Tunisia, Dr. Sofien Sghaier. He has been working in the laboratory and in the field investigation of the Bluetongue disease, which is a noncontagious, insect-borne, and viral disease of ruminants, mainly sheep, in Tunisia.



## NEWS FROM FETP YEMEN

### FETP YEMEN ORGANIZES THE FIRST TWO-WEEK WORKSHOPS OF PHEP TRAINING IN RAYMAH AND AL HUDAYDAH

On Thursday, October 22, 2020, the Field Epidemiology Training Program of Yemen (YFETP) conducted the first two-week workshop as part of the Public Health Empowerment Program (PHEP) training in the governorates of Raymah and Al Hudaydah.

Twenty-five public health professionals completed the two sessions and went back to their governorates and districts to start their four weeks of fieldwork as part of their three-month PHEP training. The two workshops were supported by WHO Yemen.



## FETP YEMEN CONDUCTS TRAINING FOR THE NINTH COHORT OF THE PHEB-BFE

On October 13 -26, 2020, FETP Yemen held training for the residents of the ninth cohort of the Public Health Empowerment Program- Basic Field Epidemiology (PHEB-BFE) course, which was funded by WHO Yemen.

The training sessions were officially launched by the Deputy Minister for Primary Health Care, Dr. Muhammad Al-Mansour, the Director-General for Disease Control and Surveillance, Dr. Khalid Al-Moayed, and the Technical Officer for WHO Yemen, Dr. Abdul Raheem Al-Hattami. Twenty-five participants from the governorates of Sa'dah and Al Hudaydah attended these sessions.

The trainers for these sessions were the YFETP staff, led by the Technical Advisor, Prof. Abdul Wahed Al-Serouri. The PHEB-BFE training sessions have been proven to be beneficial, especially at mid and periphery levels within the MoPHP of Yemen.

## FETP YEMEN HOLDS CAPACITY BUILDING TRAINING

On October 6 – 12, 2020, the Field Epidemiology Training Program of Yemen (YFETP) conducted two capacity building training sessions for 50 health professionals from the Ministry of Public Health and Population (MoPHP). The sessions were hosted at the headquarters of YFETP in Sana'a.

The participants were representatives of the Disease Control programs, the General Directorate for Family health, EPI, Child Health, as well as Health Education and Community Health Services within the MoPHP.





### Other news from FETP Yemen:

During Lockdown, YFETP encouraged their residents and graduates to:

- Join online training on COVID-19, PH, Epi, Surveillance, etc.
- Enroll in Johns Hopkins University online courses.
- Enroll in WHO (OpenWHO.Org) training and courses.
- Check ST. George's University courses.
- Participate in Webinars, e.g. EMPHNET WEBi Series, Arabic Public Health Association, and Yemeni Doctors in Diaspora.

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