



# FIELD EPIDEMIOLOGY TRAINING PROGRAMS

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## From the Editor

Welcome to the newly revamped FETP Newsletter.

Covering the period from January to June 2026, this issue highlights key developments, achievements, and emerging trends shaping Field Epidemiology Training Programs (FETPs) across the region. Countries continue to invest in strengthening their public health workforce through new and expanding training initiatives, including Public Health Empowerment Programs (PHEPs) in Jordan, Egypt, Morocco, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and beyond, while Syria and Kuwait celebrate important milestones in establishing and expanding national FETPs.

In this issue, we explore how field epidemiology training is evolving to address changing public health priorities, from specialized training tracks and mentorship to evidence generation and workforce sustainability.

We also feature recent research and publications from across the network, share a success story from Bangladesh, and provide updates from country programs working to strengthen surveillance, preparedness, and response capacities.



# FETPs by the Numbers



**4,194+**

Graduates

■■■ Advanced 1,331+

□■■ Intermediate 543+

□□■ Basic 2,320+



**15**

Countries implementing  
FETPs supported  
by EMPHNET



**800+**

Manuscripts published  
through FETPs



**6**

Exchange program  
missions conducted



**5**

Accredited  
programs

# Faces of Field Epidemiology

## From Training to Impact: Dr. Rafiul Hasan's Journey



In this edition, we feature Bangladesh FETP, a program that is helping strengthen the country's public health workforce and prepare the next generation of field epidemiologists. Implemented by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare through the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR), with support from partners including CDC and EMPHNET, the program equips health professionals with practical skills in surveillance, outbreak investigation, data analysis, and evidence-based decision-making.

Since supporting the launch of the Advanced Veterinary Field Epidemiology Training Program (FETPV) in 2020 and later the Intermediate FETP in 2022, EMPHNET has worked alongside national and

international partners to strengthen applied epidemiology capacity and workforce development in Bangladesh. Through technical support, training, mentorship, and collaboration, these efforts continue to contribute to a stronger and more resilient public health workforce.

One example of the program's impact is the journey of Dr. Md. Rafiul Hasan, whose experience demonstrates how field epidemiology training can translate into leadership, research, and lasting contributions to public health.

### Learning Through Practice

When Dr. Rafiul joined the first cohort of the Intermediate FETP in 2022, he was already serving as a medical doctor within Bangladesh's public health system. Through the training he received during his enrollment in the FETP, he gained hands-on experience addressing real-world public health challenges while strengthening his epidemiological and analytical skills.

During his training, he evaluated Bangladesh's leptospirosis surveillance system, identifying gaps in early detection and

### The Program Behind the Story

#### Established

1. Basic FETP: 2016
2. Intermediate FETP: 2022
3. Advanced Veterinary FETP (FETPV): 2020
4. Basic Veterinary FETPV: 2024

#### Implementing Institutions

- Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR)
- Department of Livestock Services (DLS)
- Chattogram Veterinary and Animal Sciences University (CVASU)

response. He also participated in the investigation of a gastrointestinal disease outbreak, conducting risk assessments and community interviews to support public health action. In addition, he led a field project assessing community knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to death registration, which led to generating insights that could support improvements in civil registration and vital statistics systems.

By the time he graduated in September 2023, Dr. Rafiul had developed not only technical expertise but also a broader understanding of how data and evidence can drive public health decision-making.

## From Training to Public Health Action

Following his graduation, Dr. Rafiul quickly applied these competencies in the field. In 2024, he led a Rapid Response Team following Cyclone Remal which affected West Bengal and Bangladesh in late May 2024. The team conducting water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) and maternal health assessments in affected communities. From another angle, his study examining WASH-related challenges among pregnant women was selected for presentation at the Royal Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene (RSTMH) Annual Meeting in the United Kingdom.



He also served as a field lead for the "Country Co-creation of Globally Consistent Primary Health Care Measurements" project in Bangladesh, where he supported the development of internationally comparable primary health care indicators and contributed to evidence-informed health system strengthening.

## From Fieldwork to Evidence Generation

Dr. Rafiul's commitment to the generation of evidence continued beyond the FETP. In 2025, he completed a Master of Public Health in Epidemiology at the National Institute of Preventive and Social Medicine (NIPSOM), where he received a Student Research Grant from the Bangladesh Medical Research Council (BMRC). His research focused on strengthening cancer surveillance through hospital-based data systems, reflecting the growing role of field epidemiologists in generating evidence that informs policy and practice.

His journey highlights an important evolution in field epidemiology. It highlights the ability to not only respond to public health threats, but also to generate the evidence needed to prevent and address them.

## Strengthening the Next Generation

Beyond his own professional achievements, Dr. Rafiul is helping build capacity for future public health leaders. He has mentored three fellows from the third cohort of the Intermediate FETP, all of whom successfully completed the program. He also facilitates QGIS training sessions for FETP trainees, helping strengthen geospatial analysis skills that are increasingly important for surveillance and outbreak response.

During the 2025 dengue outbreak response in Patharghata, Dr. Rafiul led activities that included training 85 healthcare workers and volunteers and supporting outreach efforts that reached more than 2,100 households. These activities contributed to strengthening local preparedness, response, and community engagement efforts.



## From Training to Impact



### Achievement



### Impact

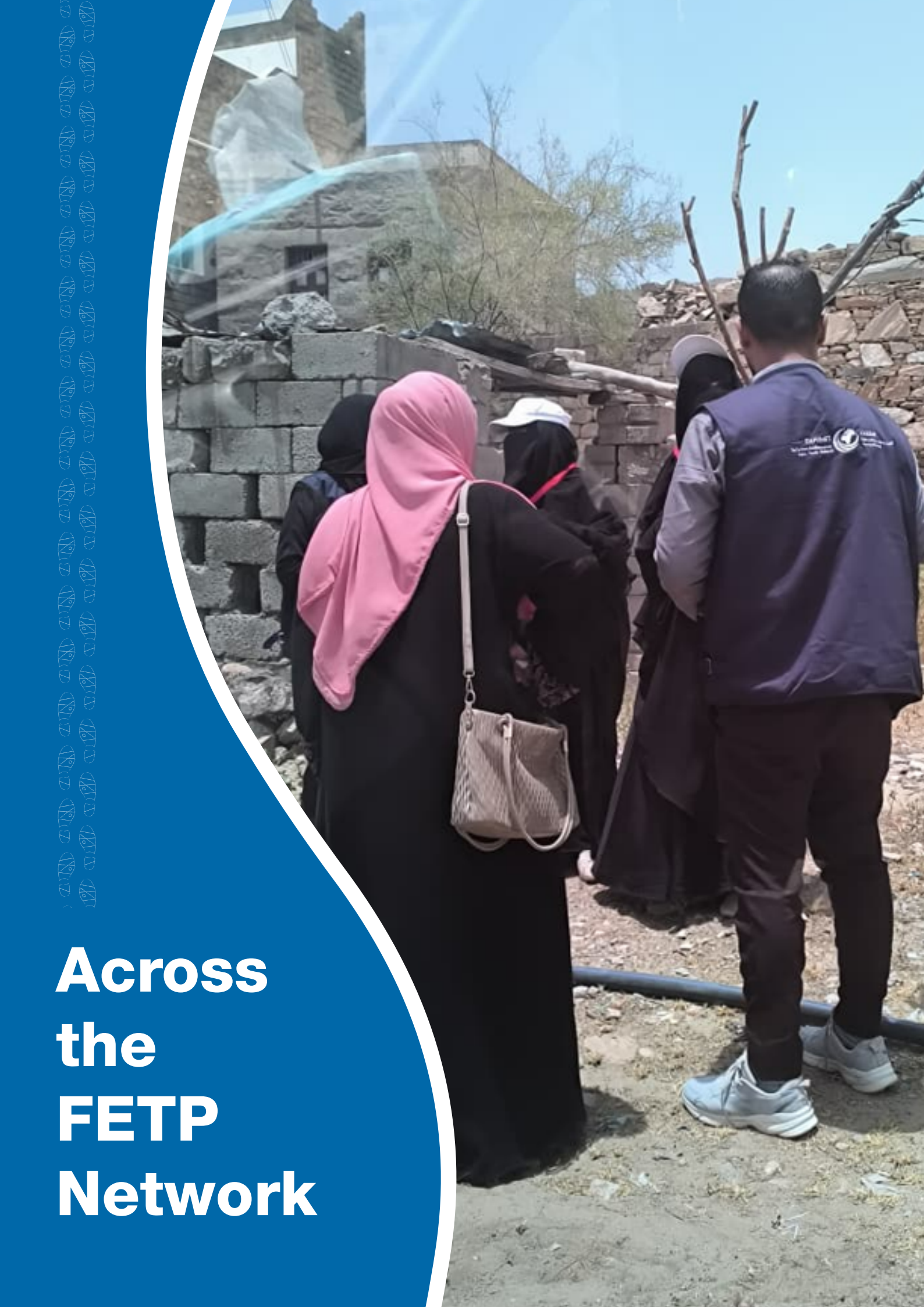
FETP Graduation	First iFETPB Cohort (2023)
Fellows Mentored	3
Healthcare Workers and Volunteers Trained	85
Households Reached Through Dengue Outreach	2,100+
International Scientific Presentation	RSTMH Annual Meeting 2024
Research Recognition	BMRC Student Research Grant

Reflecting on his experience, Dr. Rafiul shared:

*"FETP changed how I approach public health problems. I now think in terms of systems, data, and sustainability. I went from reacting to outbreaks to preventing them... and empowering others to do the same."*

Dr. Rafiul's journey reflects the broader impact of FETPs and the value of investing in field epidemiology capacity. By combining practical training, mentorship, and applied learning, the program is helping strengthen Bangladesh's ability to respond to public health threats, generate evidence, and develop future leaders capable of advancing public health both nationally and globally.

Read more about the importance of research and evidence generation [below](#).



**Across  
the  
FETP  
Network**

## AFGHANISTAN

Afghanistan continued to strengthen its field epidemiology workforce through training, scientific publication, and capacity-building initiatives. The third cohort of the Public Health Empowerment Program for Polio and Expanded Program on Immunization (PHEP-PEO) graduated 33 participants after completing a five-month in-service training program. The cohort equipped provincial and EPI staff with practical skills in the areas of disease surveillance, outbreak investigation, immunization data quality assessment, and response to vaccine-preventable diseases. Throughout the program, residents conducted field assignments, supported environmental sample collection, and applied epidemiological methods to strengthen immunization and surveillance systems at the local level.



In January, Afghanistan FETP also launched the second phase of its PHEP-PEO Mentorship Workshop, bringing together 17 participants, most of whom were PHEP-PEO graduates. The workshop strengthened mentorship competencies, communication skills, and understanding of program field assignments, reflecting the continued institutionalization of the program and the development of a national pipeline of frontline public health professionals and field epidemiologists.

Read more about the different specialized FETP tracks [below](#).

The country program also achieved an important scientific milestone with the publication of six teaching case studies in the Pan African Medical Journal (PAMJ). Developed by the Afghanistan FETP residents and graduates, the case studies cover tuberculosis surveillance, cholera, COVID-19, measles, acute watery diarrhea outbreaks, and biostatistical analysis. These publications contribute to strengthening field epidemiology training and promoting practice-based learning through real-world public health investigations.

To learn more about these publications, see the [Research Corner](#) in this issue.



## BANGLADESH

Bangladesh continued to strengthen its field epidemiology workforce through training, program evaluation, and sustainability efforts. The fifth cohort of the Intermediate FETP continued its training, with 15 residents and 11 mentors currently engaged in the program. Residents are undertaking their second fieldwork assignment, applying epidemiological methods to priority public health challenges in real-world settings.

The country program also completed a comprehensive evaluation of its FETP. The evaluation identified priority areas for development, including alumni engagement and program accreditation.



In response, EMPHNET has begun supporting the establishment of an online alumni network to strengthen connections among graduates and support continued professional development. EMPHNET is also working with the program to fulfill requirements for TEPHINET accreditation and support its long-term sustainability.

### Why Fieldwork Matters

FETPs follow a learning-by-doing approach, with approximately **75% of training taking place in the field under the guidance of mentors**. Through field assignments, residents apply epidemiological concepts to real public health challenges, including surveillance system evaluations, outbreak investigations, data analysis, and operational research.

This practical experience helps transform knowledge into action, strengthens problem-solving and leadership skills, and ensures that graduates are prepared to support evidence-based public health decision-making in their countries.

[Read how this applies in real life with Dr. Rafuil's story.](#)

Bangladesh FETP also contributed to applied learning through the publication of a new case study on a human and livestock anthrax outbreak investigated using a One Health approach. Developed as a training resource for FETP fellows and public health professionals, the case study highlights practical approaches to outbreak investigation, data interpretation, and response.

To learn more about these publications, see the [Research Corner](#) in this issue.

The program also welcomed two residents from Pakistan FETP through the EMPHNET FETP Exchange Program. Read more about this [below](#).

## EGYPT




Egypt FETP continued to expand its training portfolio and contribute to the evolution of field epidemiology training in the region. During the reporting period, preparations began for a new Public Health Empowerment Program for Respiratory Viruses (PHEP-RV) cohort with a One Health focus, reflecting the growing importance of multisectoral approaches to disease surveillance and outbreak response.

The program is also developing a new Intermediate FETP curriculum to further strengthen applied epidemiology capacity and expand training opportunities for public health professionals.

In addition, Egypt is playing a leading role as the host country for the first regional Intermediate FETP focused on mental health. Curriculum development is currently underway, and the initiative represents an important step toward integrating mental health into field epidemiology training and strengthening the capacity of public health professionals to address emerging and evolving public health challenges across the region.

Read more about specialized FETP tracks [below](#).

### Emerging Training Areas in Egypt FETP

-  PHEP-RV with a One Health focus
-  Regional Intermediate Mental Health FETP
-  New Intermediate FETP curriculum under development

## IRAQ

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is receiving growing national attention in Iraq. In June 2025, Iraq finalized its updated National Action Plan on AMR (2026–2030) through a multisectoral process involving the Ministry of Health, ministries responsible for agriculture, environment, and higher education, as well as national and international partners. The Plan adopts a One Health approach and emphasizes stronger surveillance, coordination, and workforce capacity to address AMR<sup>1</sup>.

As an extension of ongoing national efforts to address AMR, Iraq FETP and EMPHNET are exploring the development of a specialized AMR-focused training track. The proposed track would strengthen capacities in AMR surveillance, data analysis, outbreak investigation, and evidence generation, while supporting the application of field epidemiology principles to address AMR through a One Health approach.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.emro.who.int/iraq/news/iraq-moves-forward-with-a-new-national-action-plan-to-tackle-antimicrobial-resistance.html>

<https://razi.edu.ly/rmj/index.php/hm/article/download/28/37>

[https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/antimicrobial-resistance/amr-spc-npm/nap-library/national-action-plan-iraq.pdf?sfvrsn=8a7c49b1\\_1](https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/antimicrobial-resistance/amr-spc-npm/nap-library/national-action-plan-iraq.pdf?sfvrsn=8a7c49b1_1)

## JORDAN

Jordan continued advancing the development of the Public Health Empowerment Program (PHEP) – One Health through a series of key implementation milestones. Led by the Ministry of Health and EMPHNET, in collaboration with WHO and national partners, a curriculum validation workshop was held to review and finalize the program's curriculum to ensure alignment with national priorities and emerging public health challenges.

### Preparing for the PHEP One Health Implementation



**Status:** Curriculum validated and mentorship workshop completed



**Lead institutions:** Ministry of Health and EMPHNET



**Key partner:** WHO



**Focus:** One Health approach



**Goal:** Strengthen multisectoral surveillance and outbreak response



Building on this progress, the first mentorship workshop was held in Amman in June 2026, bringing together 13 mentors from various sectors and partner organizations involved in the program. The workshop-oriented participants on the One Health mentorship approach, program expectations, and key deliverables, while strengthening their capacity to support future residents throughout the training journey. Together, these activities mark important steps toward launching the program and strengthening collaboration across the human, animal, and environmental health sectors to support surveillance, outbreak detection, and response.

Explore how specialized FETP tracks are evolving in the article [below](#).

## KUWAIT

Kuwait continued advancing efforts to establish its national FETP. During the reporting period, the Kuwait Ministry of Health, Kuwait Center for Disease Control (KCDC), EMPHNET, and WHO completed a comprehensive Training Needs Assessment to identify workforce priorities and inform the design of a context-specific training program. The assessment findings are now guiding the development of a phased training pathway aimed at strengthening applied epidemiology, surveillance, outbreak response, and health security capacities.

Read more about Kuwait's journey toward establishing a national FETP in the [Expanding Field Epidemiology Capacity Across the Region](#) below.

## LEBANON

Lebanon continued strengthening its field epidemiology workforce through the implementation of a new blended Public Health Empowerment Program for Respiratory Viruses (PHEP-RV) cohort. During the reporting period, residents successfully completed the first workshop and began their fieldwork assignments, applying epidemiological concepts in real-world public health settings.

The cohort brings together 21 professionals from both the human and animal health sectors, including residents and mentors from the Ministry of Agriculture, reflecting a growing One Health approach to surveillance, preparedness, and response. Through its blend of classroom learning and field-based practice, the program continues to build capacity to address respiratory disease threats and other emerging public health challenges.

Learn more about the growing role of specialized FETP tracks in the article [below](#).

## LIBYA

During the recent EMPHNET FETP Board of Directors Meeting, **Libya FETP Director Dr. Ahmad Al Arabi** highlighted the importance of continued collaboration with EMPHNET to support the growth and development of Libya's relatively new FETP.

Reflecting on Libya's participation in the upcoming Regional Intermediate FETP Mental Health Cohort, he described it as an important milestone for the country and an opportunity to strengthen workforce capacity in a priority area of public health.

## MOROCCO

Morocco is preparing to host the region's first Advanced FETP focused on Mental Health. During the reporting period, the Morocco FETP team worked with EMPHNET to develop the curriculum outline for the program, laying the foundation for its future implementation.

As part of the preparation process, a mentorship workshop is scheduled for June 2026 to support mentors and strengthen the program's field-based training component. The initiative represents an important step in expanding field epidemiology training into emerging public health areas while maintaining the competency-based approach that defines the FETP model.

## PAKISTAN

Pakistan continued to strengthen its field epidemiology workforce through advanced training and specialized capacity-building initiatives. During the reporting period, the National Institute of Health (NIH), in collaboration with the General Directorate of Health Services in Sindh Province and with support from EMPHNET, concluded the first cohort of the Public Health Empowerment Program for Respiratory Viruses (PHEP-RV).

The program culminated in the graduation of 24 public health professionals, including surveillance officers, laboratory personnel, and data officers involved in the detection, reporting, analysis, and response to respiratory virus outbreaks. Through field assignments and practical exercises, participants strengthened their competencies in outbreak investigation, epidemiological and laboratory data analysis, risk assessment, emergency preparedness, leadership, and team management.



Earlier in February 2026, EMPHNET organized a five-day workshop for frontline surveillance officers, laboratory staff, and DHIS2 data personnel in Sindh Province, strengthening capacities in surveillance, infection prevention and control, and community engagement. The workshop supported local preparedness and response efforts and complemented the broader objectives of the PHEP-RV program.



Pakistan FETP also celebrated the graduation of 36 fellows from its 15th Advanced FETP cohort, while 38 fellows in the 16th cohort continued their academic and field-based training, contributing to the development of the next generation of field epidemiologists.

The program also participated in the EMPHNET FETP Exchange Program, with two residents completing a two-week exchange mission to Bangladesh focused on surveillance systems, scientific writing, mentorship, and applied epidemiology. Learn more in the [What's New Across the Network](#) section.

## PALESTINE

Palestine is preparing to launch the first cohort of the Public Health Empowerment Program (PHEP) – One Health as part of ongoing efforts to strengthen field epidemiology capacity and multisectoral collaboration. Supported by EMPHNET and implemented in partnership with the Palestinian Ministry of Health, the program aims to build competencies in disease surveillance, outbreak investigation, and response at the human-animal-environment interface.

The upcoming cohort marks an important step toward advancing a One Health approach and strengthening the public health workforce to address emerging and complex health threats.

## SAUDI ARABIA

Saudi Arabia continued to strengthen its field epidemiology workforce through specialized training programs focused on respiratory disease surveillance and outbreak response. During the reporting period, the Public Health Authority (PHA), in collaboration with EMPHNET, successfully concluded the Public Health Empowerment Program – MERS-CoV (PHEP-MERS) for the Hajj and Umrah regions. The blended program brought together 29 surveillance officers and public health professionals from Jeddah, Makkah, Madinah, and Taif, strengthening competencies in outbreak investigation, risk assessment, leadership, problem analysis, and emergency response. Participants completed fieldwork projects and graduated following the program's final workshop and closing ceremony.



Saudi Arabia also celebrated the graduation of the second cohort of the Public Health Empowerment Program – Basic Field Epidemiology (PHEP-BFE), which included 20 public health and surveillance professionals from across the Kingdom. Together, these programs continue to strengthen preparedness and response capacities for MERS-CoV and other public health threats.

Looking ahead, preparations are underway to conduct a Training Needs Assessment (TNA) that will help identify workforce development priorities and inform future expansion of field epidemiology training in the Kingdom.

Read the Perspectives article [below](#) to explore the evolution of FETP tracks.

## SUDAN

Sudan continued to strengthen its frontline epidemiology workforce through the Public Health Empowerment Program (PHEP). During the reporting period, the fourth cohort of the Public Health Empowerment Program for Surveillance and Expanded Program on Immunization (PHEP-EPI) officially launched, bringing together 35 participants from Khartoum, Gezira, North and South Kordofan, and the Red Sea. Following a mentorship workshop held in March, residents began their first technical workshop and field-based training, focusing on surveillance, outbreak detection and response, routine immunization data use, and community-based surveillance.



Complementing these efforts, EMPHNET and the Sudan Federal Ministry of Health conducted a Training of Trainers workshop for Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI) and surveillance officers, including PHEP graduates. The training strengthened capacities in measles and rubella surveillance, outbreak investigation, data management, and data analysis to support improved outbreak preparedness and response.



Building on nearly a decade of implementation, Sudan's PHEP continues to demonstrate the value of competency-based, field-oriented training in strengthening surveillance systems and immunization programs in fragile and conflict-affected settings.

## SYRIA

Syria continues to advance the establishment of its national Field Epidemiology Training Program (FETP). Following a Training Needs Assessment in 2025 and a curriculum validation workshop in early 2026, the country successfully launched and graduated its first Frontline FETP cohort, training 21 health professionals in surveillance, outbreak investigation, and response.

These milestones mark important progress toward strengthening public health workforce capacity and institutionalizing field epidemiology training in Syria.

Read more in [Building Capacity: Syria – From Assessment to Implementation.](#)

## TUNISIA

Tunisia continues to advance efforts toward the institutionalization of its FETP, which has trained more than 80 field epidemiologists through its intermediate and frontline training modalities since its establishment in 2017. While the program has made important contributions to workforce development, efforts are now focused on ensuring its long-term sustainability and integration within national public health structures.

To support this process, Tunisia will host an institutionalization workshop in July 2026, bringing together representatives from the Ministry of Health, Tunisia FETP, academic institutions, partners, and program graduates. The workshop is expected to develop a roadmap for strengthening governance, financing, workforce planning, and academic integration, helping position the program for sustainable growth and continued impact on public health preparedness and response.

## YEMEN

Yemen is preparing to launch a new Public Health Empowerment Program (PHEP) – One Health cohort as part of ongoing efforts to strengthen multisectoral collaboration and workforce capacity. The program will bring together professionals from the human, animal, and environmental health sectors to strengthen competencies in surveillance, outbreak investigation, and response to emerging public health threats.

The upcoming cohort reflects Yemen's continued commitment to advancing the One Health approach and building a workforce equipped to address complex health challenges through coordinated action across sectors.



# Research Corner



Research is a key component of the FETP model, transforming field experiences into evidence that strengthens public health practice and decision-making. This section highlights recent publications from EMPHNET and its partners on FETP sustainability, mentorship, evaluation, and workforce development, alongside selected research and teaching case studies produced by country programs. Together, these publications showcase the journey from fieldwork to publication.

## EMPHNET Research Highlights

[Strengthening Field Epidemiology Training through Teaching Case Studies: An EMPHNET-supported Supplement](#)

[Field Epidemiology Training Programs \(FETP\) in the Eastern Mediterranean Region and Bangladesh: Graduates' Skills Application, Career Advancement, and Continuing Education Needs](#)

[Mentorship in Field Epidemiology Training Programs in the Eastern Mediterranean Region: Mentors' Characteristics, Perceived Challenges, and Training Needs](#)

[Advancing Institutionalization and Sustainability of Field Epidemiology Training Programs in the Eastern Mediterranean Region](#)

[Evaluation of Field Epidemiology Training Programs: A Scoping Review](#)



## From the Field: Research from Country Programs



[Evaluation of Tuberculosis Surveillance System in Afghanistan: A Teaching Case-study](#)

[Summarizing Statistical Measures Including Rates, Ratios and Proportions Using Profile of Risk Factors for Noncommunicable Diseases in Afghanistan: A Teaching Case Study](#)

[Suspected Cholera Outbreak in Wardak Province, Afghanistan, 2022: A Teaching Case Study of Laboratory Role in Outbreaks Investigation](#)

[COVID-19 Outbreak in Herat Prison: An Exercise of Basic Biostatistical Analysis](#)

[Acute Watery Diarrhea \(AWD\) Outbreak in Surobi District Of Kabul, Afghanistan, 2021: A Descriptive Case Study](#)

[Measles Outbreak Investigation in Female Prison Herat Province, Afghanistan April 2024.](#)

[Anthrax Outbreak Investigation Among Humans and Livestock in Meherpur District Of Bangladesh, December 2023: A Case Study of One Health Approach](#)



### International Recognition

Two abstracts from the Bangladesh and Egypt FETPs were selected for oral presentation at the 2026 Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS) Conference.

Out of **216 abstracts submitted globally, only 12 were selected for oral presentation.**

From our region, we congratulate:

• **Dr. Pritom Muztahid**  
Bangladesh FETP

• **Dr. Doaa AlaaEldin**  
Egypt FETP

This achievement highlights the growing contribution of FETP residents and graduates to applied epidemiology, scientific research, and evidence-based public health practice.



# Perspectives

## Beyond Traditional Training: The Evolution of Field Epidemiology Training Programs in a Changing Public Health Landscape

For more than four decades, FETPs have been among the most successful workforce development models in public health. Built on the principle of learning by doing, these programs have trained thousands of epidemiologists who have strengthened surveillance systems, investigated outbreaks, responded to health emergencies, and supported evidence-based decision-making around the world.

*Central to this approach is hands-on field experience, with approximately 75% of training taking place through supervised field placements under the guidance of mentors<sup>2</sup>.*

Today, more than 80 FETPs operate across more than 160 countries and territories and continue to serve as a cornerstone of global health security<sup>3</sup>. Yet the public health landscape that shaped the first generation of FETPs is no longer the same. Climate change, antimicrobial resistance, mental health challenges, humanitarian crises, and increasingly interconnected health threats are reshaping workforce needs and expanding expectations of field epidemiologists<sup>4</sup>.

The challenge facing FETPs is no longer whether they should evolve, but how they can adapt while preserving the practical, competency-based approach that had defined their success<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11927242/>  
<https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/public-health/articles/10.3389/fpubh.2021.684174/full>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.tephinets.org/news/four-decades-field-epidemiology-training-program-fetp-tephinets-role-context-fetp-history>  
<https://www.emro.who.int/egy/egypt-news/first-fetp-vector-control-cohort-graduates-in-egypt.html>

<sup>4</sup> <https://emphnet.net/en/resources/news/2026/emphnet-develops-a-curriculum-for-climate-and-environmental-epidemiology-course-for-field-epidemiology-training-programs/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/public-health/articles/10.3389/fpubh.2024.1300084/full>  
<sup>4</sup> [https://www.cdc.gov/pod/issues/2022/22\\_0208.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/pod/issues/2022/22_0208.htm)  
<sup>4</sup> <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC12469667/>  
<sup>4</sup> <https://www.emro.who.int/egy/egypt-news/first-fetp-vector-control-cohort-graduates-in-egypt.html>  
<sup>4</sup> <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC5711325/>  
<sup>4</sup> <https://www.who.int/southeastasia/news/feature-stories/detail/building-stronger-public-health-systems--who-supporting-countries-scale-up-training-of-frontline-public-health-workers>  
<sup>5</sup> <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC12521429/>



This evolution is being driven by a combination of emerging public health priorities and workforce needs.



### Drivers of Change:

- Climate change and environmental health threats
- Antimicrobial resistance
- Mental health challenges
- Humanitarian crises and displacement
- Growing demand for evidence generation
- Expanding preparedness and response needs

As a result, countries are increasingly seeking epidemiologists who can operate across disciplines, generate actionable evidence, support decision-making, and respond to a broader range of public health priorities than ever before<sup>6</sup>.

## Rethinking the Epidemiology Workforce

Global guidance recommends at least one field epidemiologist per 200,000 people, yet many countries remain far from achieving this benchmark. Expanding workforce capacity remains important, but numbers alone are no longer enough<sup>7</sup>.

Today's health systems require epidemiologists who can generate evidence, communicate risk, engage communities, support policy development, and collaborate across disciplines. Increasingly, they must also operate within complex humanitarian and emergency settings, where preparedness, coordination, and adaptive decision-making are as important as technical epidemiological skills<sup>8</sup>. Rather than producing a single type of epidemiologist, FETPs are increasingly preparing professionals capable of applying epidemiological competencies in diverse and evolving contexts<sup>9 10</sup>.

*"The landscape of field epidemiology is evolving, with increasing demands in emerging areas such as zoonotic diseases, antimicrobial resistance, genomics, and non-communicable diseases, while high demands to investigate and respond to outbreaks of infectious diseases continue." — WHO<sup>11</sup>*

## Expanding Field Epidemiology for a Changing Public Health Landscape

One of the most significant developments in recent years has been the emergence of thematic and specialized FETP tracks. As public health priorities evolve, FETPs are increasingly expanding into areas such as immunization, mental health, climate and environmental health, genomic surveillance, antimicrobial resistance, and One Health<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>6</sup><https://emphnet.net/en/resources/news/2026/emphnet-develops-a-curriculum-for-climate-and-environmental-epidemiology-course-for-field-epidemiology-training-programs/>

<sup>7</sup><https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/public-health/articles/10.3389/fpubh.2024.1300084/full>

<sup>8</sup>[https://www.cdc.gov/pod/issues/2022/22\\_0208.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/pod/issues/2022/22_0208.htm)

<sup>9</sup><https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC12469667/>

<sup>10</sup><https://www.emro.who.int/egy/egypt-news/first-fetp-vector-control-cohort-graduates-in-egypt.html>

<sup>11</sup><https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC5711325/>

<sup>12</sup><https://www.who.int/southeastasia/news/feature-stories/detail/building-stronger-public-health-systems--who-supporting-countries-scale-up-training-of-frontline-public-health-workers>

<sup>13</sup><https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11361411/>

<sup>14</sup><https://www.woah.org/app/uploads/2024/05/competencies-for-oh-field-epidemiology-cohfe-framework.pdf>

<sup>15</sup><https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC12261544/>  
[https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/emergency-preparedness/who-hepr\\_wha2023-21051248b.pdf](https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/emergency-preparedness/who-hepr_wha2023-21051248b.pdf)

<sup>16</sup><https://emphnet.net/en/resources/news/2026/emphnet-develops-a-curriculum-for-climate-and-environmental-epidemiology-course-for-field-epidemiology-training-programs/>  
<https://www.who.int/southeastasia/news/feature-stories/detail/building-stronger-public-health-systems--who-supporting-countries-scale-up-training-of-frontline-public-health-workers>  
<https://www.woah.org/app/uploads/2024/05/cohfe-01-framework-web-who-2024-v2.pdf>



Rather than representing a departure from the traditional FETP model, these tracks build upon its foundations. The same competencies that support outbreak investigations and surveillance activities can be applied to vaccine-preventable diseases, climate-sensitive health threats, mental health systems, or antimicrobial resistance<sup>13</sup>.

Alongside specialization, FETPs are increasingly embracing contextualization, adapting training models to address country-specific workforce gaps, health priorities, and operational realities. This flexibility allows programs to remain relevant across diverse settings while preserving the principles that underpin field epidemiology training.

### Across the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR) and beyond, EMPHNET has contributed to this evolution through the development and support of specialized tracks including:

- Regional Intermediate and Advanced FETP in mental health in collaboration with Africa CDC
- Climate and environmental epidemiology curriculum development in collaboration with UKHSA (Read more about it [below](#))
- Public Health Empowerment Programs (PHEPs) focused on priority public health threats and preparedness areas such as:



Respiratory viruses  
(PHEP-RV)



Middle East Respiratory  
Syndrome (PHEP-MERS)



Immunization-focused  
programs (PHEP-EPI/PEO)

<https://www.who.int/southeastasia/news/feature-stories/detail/building-stronger-public-health-systems--who-supporting-countries-scale-up-training-of-frontline-public-health-workers>

<https://emphnet.net/en/resources/news/2026/emphnet-webi-highlights-the-role-of-immunization-focused-field-epidemiology-training-programs/>

<sup>13</sup><https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC5711307/>

One of the clearest examples of this shift can be seen in the growing integration of mental health into field epidemiology training. As noted by Mr. Dumsani Njobo Mamba, Mental Health Technical Officer at Africa CDC:

*"The goal is no longer to train epidemiologists solely to investigate disease outbreaks, but also professionals who understand broader public health challenges, including mental health."<sup>14</sup>*

Mental health is only one example of how epidemiological competencies are being applied in new contexts. Immunization-focused FETP and PHEP tracks provide another example of this evolution, applying epidemiological competencies to vaccine-preventable disease surveillance, routine immunization, preparedness, and outbreak response. As some of the earliest specialized training models in the region, programs in countries such as Afghanistan, Lebanon, Sudan, and Yemen, have strengthened disease prevention efforts while informing newer tracks focused on respiratory viruses, One Health, and climate-related health threats.



Together, these examples illustrate a broader shift in workforce development, where field epidemiology competencies are increasingly being applied to emerging priority areas while preserving the foundations of FETPs. As a result, field epidemiologists are increasingly expected to generate evidence, work across sectors, and contribute to multidisciplinary solutions that strengthen public health system.

Specialized tracks therefore represent more than curriculum expansion. They reflect a broader effort to make field epidemiology training more adaptive, relevant, and responsive to the realities facing modern public health systems.

## From Responding to Threats to Generating Evidence

Historically, FETPs have been recognized for producing professionals capable of detecting and responding to outbreaks<sup>15</sup>. Today's health systems require something more.

The ability to generate evidence is becoming just as important as the ability to respond to emergencies. Operational research, surveillance evaluations, implementation science, policy analysis, and program assessments are increasingly informing public health decisions and shaping health system performance<sup>16</sup>.

<sup>14</sup><https://emphnet.net/en/resources/news/2026/emphnet-webi-addresses-women-s-mental-health-in-fragile-and-crisis-affected-settings/>

<sup>15</sup><https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC12392668/>

<sup>16</sup> <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC12992315/>

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/373546254\\_The\\_Field\\_Epidemiology\\_Training\\_Program's\\_Contribution\\_to\\_Essential\\_Public\\_Health\\_Functions\\_in\\_Seven\\_National\\_Public\\_Health\\_Institutes](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/373546254_The_Field_Epidemiology_Training_Program's_Contribution_to_Essential_Public_Health_Functions_in_Seven_National_Public_Health_Institutes)

## Modern Epidemiologists Must Answer

- What happened?
- Why did it happen?
- What should be done next?
- How do we know it worked?

As a result, field epidemiologists are increasingly expected to investigate outbreaks, conduct research, evaluate programs, generate operational insights, and communicate findings to decision-makers. This shift is reflected in the growing number of publications, surveillance evaluations, and operational research projects emerging from FETPs, transforming field experiences into evidence that informs policy, practice, and public health action.

## Expanding Reach and Equity

As FETPs evolve, ensuring equitable access to training has become an increasingly important consideration<sup>17</sup>. Future FETPs must reach frontline and subnational public health professionals through flexible learning models, virtual mentorship, regional hubs, and decentralized field placements. The goal is not simply to train more epidemiologists, but to ensure expertise reaches the places where public health action happens.

Flexible learning approaches, such as:



Hybrid learning models



Regional training hubs



Virtual mentorship



Local mentor development



Decentralized field placements<sup>18</sup>

## Mentorship as a Pillar of FETP Quality

If specialized tracks represent the future of FETP content, mentorship remains the foundation of FETP quality<sup>19 20</sup>.

The learning-by-doing model depends heavily on mentors. Residents spend most of their training in the field (75%), where mentors guide investigations, review analyses, provide feedback, and support professional growth<sup>21</sup>. Strong mentor networks help maintain quality, strengthen institutional memory, and create pathways for graduates to become future leaders, trainers, and advocates<sup>22</sup>.

***"An excellent set of teaching modules with inadequate mentorship does not result in well-trained field epidemiologists." — Dr. Carl Reddy, TEPHINET's Director<sup>23</sup>***

<sup>17</sup><https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11236720/>

<sup>18</sup><https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11927242/>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.tephinet.org/news/spotlight-fetp-mentorship-five-mentors-share-their-perspectives>

<sup>20</sup><https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC12727982/>

<sup>21</sup><https://www.tephinet.org/news/four-decades-field-epidemiology-training-program-fetp-tephinets-role-context-fetp-history>

<sup>22</sup><https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC12727982/>

<sup>23</sup><https://www.tephinet.org/news/spotlight-fetp-mentorship-five-mentors-share-their-perspectives>

EMPHNET's investments in mentorship development, exchange programs, and alumni engagement reflect the recognition that sustainable workforce development depends as much on people as it does on curricula.



## Building Workforce Ecosystems, Not Just Training Programs

Field epidemiology training does not end at graduation. As public health challenges become more complex, field epidemiologists require ongoing opportunities to learn, collaborate, and exchange experiences throughout their careers. This has led to growing interest in exchange programs, communities of practice, peer learning networks, and continuing professional development initiatives<sup>24</sup>.

This has prompted a broader shift from viewing FETPs as standalone training programs to viewing them as part of a larger workforce ecosystem. Across the region, initiatives are helping field epidemiologists continue learning and collaborating beyond formal training, including:



**EMPHNET Regional Conference:** Facilitating research dissemination, experience sharing, and regional collaboration.



**FETP PeerLab (An Upcoming Initiative):** Promoting peer learning, knowledge exchange, and professional development among FETP graduates.



**EMPHNET Electronic Library (EEL):** Providing continuous access to evidence, publications, learning materials, and public health resources.



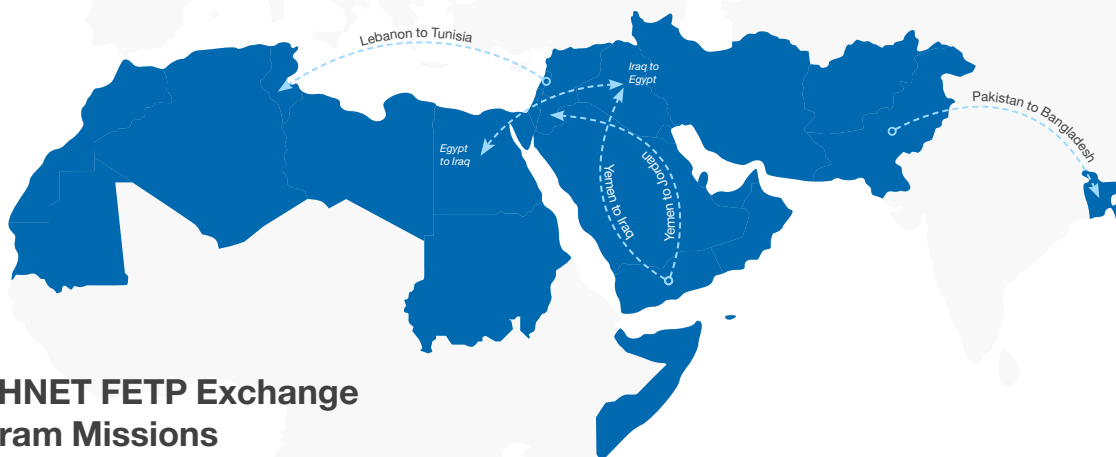
**FETP Ambassadors Program:** Strengthening visibility, communication, and knowledge sharing across country programs.



**EMPHNET Webinar Series (WEBi):** Building capacity, fostering networking, and increasing visibility of field epidemiology experiences and public health initiatives.



**EMPHNET FETP Exchange Program:** Providing hands-on learning opportunities across countries and public health systems.



### EMPHNET FETP Exchange Program Missions

<sup>24</sup><https://emphnet.net/en/our-work/center-of-excellence-for-applied-epidemiology/emphnet-fetp-exchange-program/>

## Sustaining the Future of FETPs

As FETPs continue to expand, questions of sustainability become increasingly important. Many programs still rely heavily on donor support, while long-term institutionalization remains uneven across countries<sup>25,26</sup>.

Challenge	Why It Matters
<b>Dependence on External Funding</b>	Many FETPs rely heavily on donor support, creating uncertainty for long-term planning, trainee support, field activities, and program expansion. Diversified and domestic funding mechanisms are critical for sustainability.
<b>Limited Institutionalization</b>	Programs that are not fully embedded within ministries of health, national public health institutes, or academic institutions may face challenges in maintaining operations, leadership support, and long-term ownership.
<b>Workforce Retention</b>	Without clear professional recognition, advancement opportunities, or career pathways, countries risk losing trained epidemiologists and the expertise invested in developing them.
<b>Mentorship Capacity and Succession Planning</b>	High-quality mentorship is essential to the learning-by-doing model. Sustaining programs requires a continuous pipeline of trained mentors capable of supporting residents and future cohorts.
<b>Keeping Curricula Relevant to Emerging Threats</b>	Public health priorities continue to evolve. FETPs must regularly review and update curricula to address new risks while remaining aligned with established competency frameworks.
<b>Strengthening Regional Collaboration and Knowledge Exchange</b>	Continued collaboration across countries is essential for sharing best practices, strengthening preparedness, and ensuring that lessons learned in one setting benefit others across the region.

The Global Field Epidemiology Roadmap has emphasized the importance of sustainable financing, stronger institutional ownership, and coordinated action across the broader FETP enterprise. Future success will require diversified funding sources, stronger partnerships, and clear professional pathways for graduates<sup>27,28</sup>. Yet sustainability alone is not enough. As programs expand and diversify, maintaining quality becomes equally important.

<sup>25</sup><https://gfep.info/activities/strengthen>

<sup>26</sup><https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/public-health/articles/10.3389/fpubh.2025.1669319/full>

<sup>27</sup><https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8217588/>

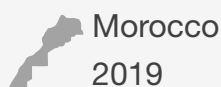
<sup>28</sup><https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/public-health/articles/10.3389/fpubh.2025.1669319/full>

## Balancing Innovation and Quality

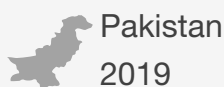
Perhaps the most important question facing FETPs is how to innovate without compromising quality. As programs expand into new domains and introduce new delivery approaches, quality assurance becomes increasingly important. Curriculum review, competency mapping, accreditation, mentorship standards, continuous assessment, and credentialing discussions all play an important role in ensuring that FETPs maintain their rigor while adapting to changing needs<sup>29</sup>.

The objective is not to preserve FETPs exactly as they were, nor to reinvent them entirely. The objective is to build adaptive programs that remain grounded in the principles that have made field epidemiology successful for more than four decades.

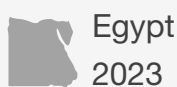
### FETP Accredited Programs



Morocco  
2019



Pakistan  
2019



Egypt  
2023



Iraq  
2025



Afghanistan  
2025

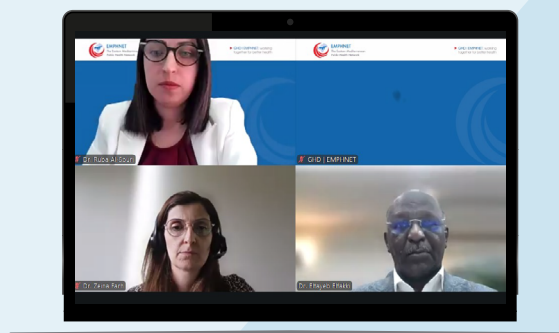
## Looking Ahead

Ultimately, the evolution of FETPs is not simply about expanding curricula or introducing new tracks. It is about ensuring that training translates into meaningful public health action through surveillance, preparedness, outbreak response, evidence generation, and health system strengthening.

Through specialized training initiatives, mentorship development, exchange programs, peer learning platforms, and regional knowledge-sharing networks, EMPHNET is helping shape this evolution. These efforts demonstrate that the future of FETPs lies not only in expanding training opportunities, but also in building resilient workforce ecosystems that support epidemiologists throughout their careers and strengthen public health systems for years to come.

### WEBi Spotlight

EMPHNET recently hosted the 54th session of its WEBi Series, titled "The Role of Immunization-Focused FETPs in Preventing and Controlling Vaccine-Preventable Diseases in Fragile Settings." The session explored how immunization-focused FETPs and PHEPs strengthen surveillance, outbreak response, routine immunization, and preparedness capacities in fragile and emergency settings.



Watch the webinar and read more [here](#)

# Expanding Field Epidemiology Capacity Across the Region

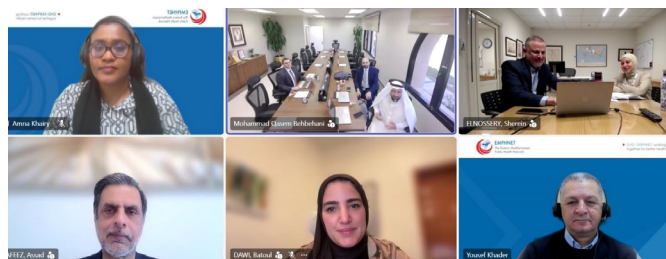
Across the region, countries are establishing and expanding FETPs to strengthen workforce capacity, improve preparedness, and institutionalize applied epidemiology training. Kuwait and Syria represent two recent examples, with both countries advancing efforts to build sustainable FETPs tailored to their national public health priorities.

## Kuwait: Building the Foundations of a National FETP

Kuwait is taking important steps toward establishing its national FETP, marking a significant milestone in strengthening the country's public health workforce and preparedness capacities.

In 2026, the Kuwait Center for Disease Control (KCDC), with support from EMPHNET and the World Health Organization Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean (WHO EMRO), completed a comprehensive Training Needs Assessment (TNA) to inform the design and development of the program. The assessment brought together stakeholders from across the health sector, including public health leadership, surveillance teams, laboratories, emergency preparedness programs, academia, and One Health partners.

Using surveys, interviews, consultations, and field visits, the assessment examined workforce capacities, institutional readiness, and national public health priorities. Findings highlighted opportunities to further strengthen competencies in surveillance data analysis, outbreak investigation, emergency preparedness and response, risk communication, leadership, and multisectoral collaboration.



The results are now guiding the development of a phased and context-specific training model that will begin with the Public Health Empowerment Program – Basic Field Epidemiology (PHEP-BFE), with future expansion toward intermediate, advanced, and specialized training tracks.

By grounding program development in a comprehensive assessment of national needs, Kuwait is establishing a strong foundation for a sustainable field epidemiology training pathway that supports evidence-based public health action, workforce development, and health security.

### Kuwait FETP Development Milestones

Milestone	Status
• Training Needs Assessment	Completed (2026)
• Lead Institution	Kuwait Center for Disease Control (KCDC)
• Key Partners	EMPHNET, WHO EMRO
• Stakeholders Engaged	30+
• Professionals Surveyed	~100
• First Planned Training Level	PHEP-BFE
• Future Expansion	Intermediate, Advanced, and Specialized Tracks

### Syria: From Assessment to Implementation

As part of broader efforts to strengthen public health preparedness and support health system recovery, Syria has taken important steps toward establishing its national FETP. Led by the Ministry of Health, with support from EMPHNET, WHO EMRO, and the WHO Syria Country Office, the initiative aims to build a sustainable workforce capable of strengthening surveillance, outbreak detection, and public health response.

The development of the program was informed by a comprehensive TNA conducted in October 2025. The assessment examined national workforce needs, surveillance system capacities, and institutional readiness for implementing a national FETP. It also supported the establishment of the program's governance structure, including technical and steering committees, program leadership, and advisory mechanisms.

Findings highlighted strong national commitment to launching the program, alongside opportunities to strengthen mentoring capacity, epidemiological skills, surveillance functions, outbreak investigation, data management, and coordination across key public health institutions. These findings directly informed the design of the Syria FETP and its curriculum.

Building on this foundation, a curriculum validation workshop was held in Damascus in January 2026, bringing together representatives from the Ministry of Health, academia, agriculture, laboratories, and other stakeholders to adapt the curriculum to Syria's public health priorities and operational realities. Discussions focused on core epidemiology competencies, surveillance, outbreak investigation, leadership, and field-based learning, while also emphasizing mentorship and long-term program sustainability.



The successful launch and graduation of the first Frontline FETP cohort in May of 2026 marked the transition from planning to implementation. Together, the training needs assessment, curriculum development process, and first cohort represent important milestones toward institutionalizing field epidemiology training in Syria and strengthening national capacities for surveillance, outbreak detection, and public health response.

### Syria FETP Development Milestones

#### Milestone

- Training Needs Assessment
- Curriculum Validation Workshop
- First Frontline Cohort
- Graduates
- Lead Institution
- Key Partners

#### Status

Completed (2025)  
 January 2026  
 Successfully graduated  
 21 Health professionals  
 Ministry of Health  
 EMPHNET, WHO, WHO EMRO

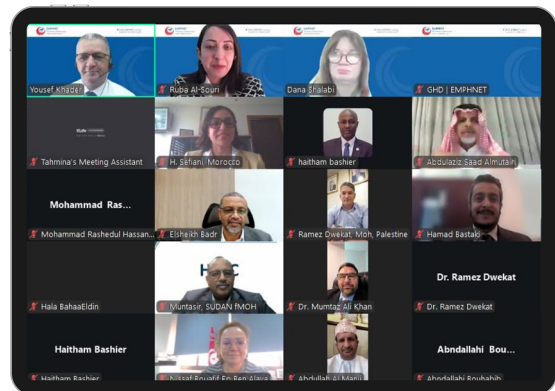
Together, Kuwait and Syria illustrate how countries are adapting the FETP model to their national priorities while strengthening surveillance systems, workforce capacity, and preparedness for future public health threats.

# What's New Across the Network

Explore upcoming opportunities, resources, and initiatives designed to support FETP residents, graduates, mentors, and program leaders across the region.

## EMPHNET FETP Board of Directors Meeting

In June, EMPHNET convened its biannual FETP Board of Directors Meeting, bringing together FETP directors and representatives from 16 countries across the Eastern Mediterranean Region and other priority countries. The meeting provided a platform to review progress across country programs, share updates from newly established FETPs in Syria and Kuwait, and discuss opportunities to strengthen collaboration, institutionalization, and sustainability across the network.



The meeting reaffirmed the importance of regional cooperation and peer learning in advancing field epidemiology training and workforce development.

## EMPHNET Regional Conference 2026

Abstract submissions are now open for the EMPHNET Regional Conference. FETP residents and graduates are encouraged to submit their work for oral and poster presentations, compete for abstract awards, and share their experiences with public health professionals from across the region and beyond.

[Read more and submit your abstract.](#)

## FETP Exchange Program Strengthens Regional Learning

Under the EMPHNET FETP Exchange Program, Dr. Fozia Afridi and Dr. Ghafoor from Pakistan FETP recently completed a two-week exchange mission hosted by the Bangladesh FETP at the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) at Dhaka. During the mission, they participated in scientific writing workshops, surveillance site visits, emergency operations simulations, and training in epidemiological software, while engaging with Bangladesh FETP fellows and mentors. The exchange provided valuable opportunities for peer learning, mentorship, and cross-country collaboration, reinforcing EMPHNET's commitment to strengthening the regional field epidemiology workforce.



### Inside the Exchange



#### Duration

2 weeks



#### Participants

2 Pakistan FETP residents



#### Host Institution

IEDCR, FETP Bangladesh



#### Focus Areas

Surveillance, Scientific Writing, DHIS2, PHEOC, R, QGIS

## FETP Advocacy Toolkit

To support the sustainability and institutionalization of FETPs, EMPHNET recently launched the FETP Advocacy Toolkit for the EMR. The toolkit provides practical guidance, templates, and tools to help country programs strengthen advocacy efforts, engage stakeholders, and communicate the value and impact of FETPs within national health systems.

[Access it.](#)

## Climate Change and Environmental Epidemiology Curriculum for FETPs

EMPHNET, in partnership with the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), continues to advance the development of a Climate Change and Environmental Epidemiology curriculum for FETPs. Building on findings from a regional Delphi process, experts from across the region convened to identify competencies, learning objectives, field activities, and assessment approaches that integrate climate and environmental health into existing FETP frameworks.

The curriculum is currently being finalized and will be accompanied by a regional Training of Trainers initiative to support future implementation. The effort aims to equip field epidemiologists with the skills needed to address climate-sensitive health threats, environmental exposures, and emerging public health challenges through applied, field-based practice.

Read more about it [here](#).



## World Field Epidemiology Day 2026

EMPHNET will once again mark World Field Epidemiology Day (WFED) this September through a regional webinar celebrating the contributions of field epidemiologists across the region. More details will be announced soon. In the meantime, we invite readers to watch last year's symposium, ***A Lens from the Field: FETP Stories of Impact***, which highlighted experiences and achievements from FETP programs across the region.

[Watch the recorded webinar.](#)



Stay connected with EMPHNET for upcoming events, resources, and opportunities to learn, share, and contribute to the growing field epidemiology community.



# Training and Resources

Looking to continue your learning journey? Here are a few opportunities and resources that may be of interest to FETP residents, graduates, mentors, and public health professionals.

## IAPH Programs and Courses



[Executive Professional Master Program in Public Health Emergency Management \(Special Discount for FETPs\)](#)



[Professional Diploma in Environmental Health](#)



[Technical Diploma in Research Methods and Analysis](#)



[Technical Diploma in Applied Public Health Emergency Management](#)



[Health Project Management Course](#)

## Free EMPHNET Courses

[Stakeholders' Mapping and Analysis](#)

[Public Health Ethics](#)

## EMPHNET Electronic Library (EEL)

Explore the EMPHNET Electronic Library (EEL), a free digital knowledge platform [here](#).