



Huda Abdul Ghaffar, WHO fellow in health promotion, 20 October 2019–20 July 2020

It was very educational. Apart from the work I did at my unit, I was also introduced to a wider set of activities that the office performs. I learned how vital the Regional Office is in providing technical support and guidance, especially to the fragile states in our Region that are struggling because of decades of war/instability and economic challenges.

I completed my graduate degree in Dental Surgery from Pakistan and practised dentistry in Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates. I was then accepted at the University of Strathclyde in Scotland to study for a Masters in Business Administration.

### **What inspired you to come to work every day?**

Although I had assigned projects, there were always some discussions, meetings or seminars organized by different departments in the office which were mostly open to all to attend. I also got the chance to learn from the other fellows in the programme, since they all brought with them a diverse set of knowledge and skills.

### **What are your future goals?**

I am looking forward to pursuing a career in public health in multilateral organization. My interest lies in health promotion and digital health.

### **What were your major contributions during the fellowship?**

I developed a performance management system for my unit to monitor and track the status and progress of health promotion programmes in the Region. I also drafted a report on mapping of equity and determinants of health in the policy documents of the Global Action Plan signatory organizations in the Eastern Mediterranean. I was also involved in developing policy documents on the Health for Peace initiative and designed its Intranet webpage. I built a website for a project in Somalia that focused on promoting mental health and psychosocial support for youth. I also developed an NPI information resource toolkit on COVID-19 for public health authorities and pandemic response implementers in the Region and presented at the oral health webinar organized by the Regional Office to discuss a way forward to providing dental services in the Region amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **What is your takeaway from this fellowship?**

It is a great experience for those who are enthusiastic about public health and want to explore this sector. You may not have a clear idea in mind on where you want to go since it is a diverse area, but this fellowship will give you the experience and an insight into how large multilateral agencies work and this may help you carve your own career path.

### **What were your fun experiences outside the office in Cairo?**

Cairo is a city rich in culture and history. The city is alive all the time and has so much to offer. I had one of the most amazing experiences living in Cairo, meeting my fellow colleagues and making lasting friendships.

### **Any tips and suggestions for future fellows?**

The Regional Office has an open door policy, you can approach anyone with your queries and they will be more than happy to guide/advice you. The office has a very warm and friendly atmosphere. And being a woman, I was so proud to work in an office that has visibly strong female representation at all levels.

This fellowship programme gave a platform to young professionals from developing countries to avail the opportunity of working at one of the world's most prestigious and vital health

organizations – WHO.

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