The draft regional materials for community health workers on "Caring for the sick child in the community" were field-tested in El Fayoum, Egypt, from 6 to 8 July 2010. The course was facilitated by a group of experienced regional Integrated Management of Childhood Health (IMCI) trainers who had attended a three-day review of the same materials in Cairo.

This version of the materials, in Arabic, was designed for settings in which community health workers are not authorized to dispense medicines. Within this context, they are expected to identify common child health problems (serious conditions requiring referral, diarrhoea, pneumonia and malnutrition) and advise child caregivers on home care, vaccination and feeding practices.

The 30 participants included three cadres of community health workers relevant to Egypt and were divided into three groups, namely: 1) Raedat Ryfiat, who are community health workers hired by the Ministry of Health, whose terms of reference include maternal and child health within the "Family health model"—in addition to promoting family planning—and who operate in almost all areas served by rural health facilities; 2) volunteers from nongovernmental organizations, who are present especially in Upper Egypt and frontier governorates; and 3) home visiting nurses, who operate mostly in Lower Egypt.

This first training course was very well received by the participants and areas for revision were identified to finalize them. The final course schedule is likely to be of a five-day duration.

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