



Dr Mohamed Essam Mahmoud, WHO health promotion fellow, October 2019–January 2020

Working for the WHO Regional Office provided me with an excellent opportunity to meet a vast array of experts and professionals working in various fields of public health.

I am a medical doctor from Egypt with a masters degree in international health from Heidelberg University, Germany.

During my time in the Regional Office I learnt something new every day from my colleagues and other fellows. I was able to expand my knowledge in a range of areas related to public health, such as emergencies and health systems.

WHO's Thirteenth General Programme of Work sets out WHO's strategic direction for a 5-year period and reading this document meant that I was able to familiarize myself with WHO's vision, mission and scope of work. I gained hands-on experience through assisting in the development of a regional review of mental health literacy among young people in the Region and gained a greater understanding of the process of strategy development.

Now that I have finished my fellowship I am going to Germany to work for Ada, a global digital health company, to develop an online medical application in Arabic. I hope I will have an opportunity for future collaboration with the Organization in the future.

Learning is a continuous process and I intend to make use of all opportunities presented to me in order to strengthen my skills and advance my career.

Some of the tasks I undertook as part of my fellowship included:

- conducting a regional review on mental health literacy among young people in the Eastern Mediterranean Region;
- co-authoring a report on the first expert meeting of the regional Commission on Social Determinants of Health regional commission led by world-renowned Professor Sir Micheal Marmot of the Institute of Health Equity at University College London;
- reviewing the content and language of a short Arabic course entitled "Accelerating progress towards the health-related Sustainable Development Goals".

Meeting the other fellows in the office was also a fun experience. I organized different events for us to familiarize ourselves with Cairo and visit some of Cairo's famous landmarks and touristic places. These experiences were also invaluable.

I would tell any fellow to be proactive, make use of opportunities presented and do not hesitate to approach people to share new ideas. There is much to learn from engaging with others.

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