



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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