





**Muna Samawi, WHO fellow in mental health, October 2019–June 2020**  
**What inspired you to come to work everyday?**

My colleagues, and especially the young professionals at the Regional Office. We encouraged and learned from each other on a daily basis, both professionally and personally.

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

I hope to work on reforming the mental health system in Jordan, my home country, with the goal of scaling up mental health services in primary care and the community.

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

My main focus during the fellowship was developing advocacy and awareness materials around mental health in the workplace. I worked on synthesizing available guidance and evidence to create practical tools for promoting mental well-being and preventing mental distress. The materials were aimed at workers themselves, as well as their employers, organizations and peers.

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

I realized that our Region is full of resources and potential, and that we need young professionals from this Region to build a clear vision and give long-term commitments in order to see change and have ownership over it.

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

Cairo is full of fun and chaos, truly a city that never sleeps. We had the chance to visit many sites around the pyramids, Islamic Cairo, the Nile, Heliopolis and the more modern arts and cultural spots too. My favourite times were probably the potlucks and house gatherings we organized for our group from time to time – they are what made Cairo feel like home, not just a tourist spot.

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

Try as much as you can to engage with colleagues outside your unit and your department, and to draw connections to your own work. Good public health work is multidisciplinary and creative, so take every chance you get to step outside the box.

Being a WHO Fellow is a truly invaluable experience for any young public health professional. Not only did I expand my technical expertise, the fellowship allowed me to build a broad network of colleagues from all around the Region and the world.

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