

Field Epidemiology and Laboratory Training Program

A Global Health Activity of the Division of Global Public Health Capacity Development

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

In 2006, CDC started two new FELTPs in Pakistan and South Africa, under the supervision of a locally based resident advisor.

FETPs and FELTPs: Supporting CDC's Global Health Mission

Since 1980, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has collaborated with Ministries of Health (MOHs) around the world to enhance international public health capacity through Field Epidemiology Training Programs (FETPs). The FETP was modeled after CDC's Epidemic Intelligence Service and has since evolved to include the Field Epidemiology and Laboratory Training Program (FELTP).

The FETPs and FELTPs help support CDC's global health diplomacy by fostering close partnerships with MOHs in the developing and the developed world, U.S. diplomatic facilities abroad, and international agencies. Staff work directly with these entities to provide hands-on support and training to help people around the world lead healthier, safer lives.

Objectives

CDC staff provide technical assistance and support to help countries develop, set up, and implement dynamic public health strategies to improve and strengthen their public health workforce, systems, and infrastructure. FETPs and FELTPs are tailored to strengthen public health capacity in accordance with each country's culture, national priorities, established relationships, and existing public health infrastructure.

In addition, to establish an FETP or an FELTP, we typically provide MOHs with an in-country resident advisor for four to six years to help guide training and technical assistance.

FE(L)TP Curriculum

FETPs and FELTPs differ from traditional epidemiology training programs in that they offer training through service in applied epidemiology, that is to say the use of epidemiology as a tool to design, evaluate, and improve interventions to protect the public's health.

The two-year, full-time training and service program involves classroom instruction and field assignments. Trainees take courses in epidemiology, communications, economics, and management. They also learn about quantitative- and behavior-based strategies. In addition, trainees work in the field, where they conduct epidemiologic investigations and field surveys; evaluate surveillance systems; perform disease control and prevention measures; report their findings to decision-makers and policy-makers; and train other health workers.

Trainees spend an average of 75% of their time in field placements. Tasks performed while in the field include evaluations of surveillance systems, outbreak investigations, analytic studies, and publications, allowing trainees to provide service to their country during training.

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For more on CDC's global health activities, visit www.cdc.gov/cogh

FELTP: A Unique Approach

An FELTP promotes epidemiology and public health laboratory collaboration by providing joint epidemiology laboratory leadership and management training, including public health laboratorians in field investigations; using laboratory data for disease surveillance; and improving biosafety and quality assurance control in specimen collection and transport, laboratory analysis, reporting, and interpretation. As a result, timely and reliable laboratory-confirmed disease data is available to public health officers to support evidence-based decision-making.

Sustainability

Field work activities are conducted in service sites selected to fill a need identified by the MOH. The FETP and FELTP experience also prepares trainees for public service leadership roles upon graduation from the program. FETPs and FELTPs nurture a culture of evidence-based decision-making as program graduates investigate disease outbreaks, strengthen surveillance and laboratory systems, and serve as mentors for future public health officers in their countries. Most graduates stay in the MOH, many in leadership roles.

Since 1980, CDC has supported (e.g., supported a resident advisor) 30 FETP and FELTPs. Of these, 27 are still producing graduates.

FETPs and FELTPs with active support from DGPHCD

