

Field Epidemiology Training Program

Building workforce capacity in disease detection and outbreak response

In our globalized world, contagious diseases such as Ebola and other health threats can spread rapidly across international borders. Every country needs a team of highly-trained epidemiologists to detect and rapidly respond to outbreaks. Since 1980, CDC, through the Field Epidemiology Training Program (FETP), has partnered with ministries of health to:

- Strengthen public health systems;
- Build workforce capacity; and
- Reduce the shortage of trained field epidemiologists able to detect, investigate and rapidly respond to health threats.



FETP has been fully engaged in the Ebola response in West Africa.

Resident Advisors, staff, residents and graduates are helping to support their countries' preparedness activities worldwide and deploying as field epidemiologists to the heavily affected countries to assist with activities such as contact tracing and surveillance.

Contribution to global health protection

Mission – Working with ministries of health and other partners, the FETP Branch supports FETP residents who play a critical role in conducting field investigations and sharing scientific data and ideas that can improve health outcomes on a daily basis and in times of crisis.

Enhancing Global Health Security – To help achieve global health security, CDC's FETP Branch plays a significant role in assisting countries in meeting their International Health Regulation (2005) core capacity requirements. FETP residents are our "boots on the ground" in the ongoing battle against infectious diseases, environmental threats, and chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease and cancer.

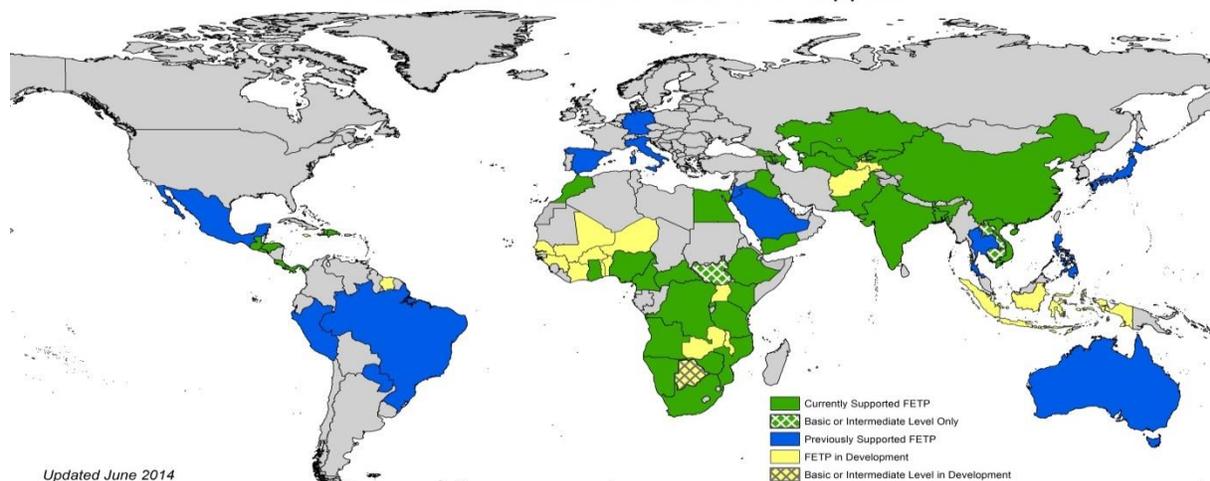
Global Coverage – CDC's FETP Branch currently supports 46 countries on 5 continents. This includes the placement of in-country Resident Advisors who play a critical role in providing mentorship, guidance, and technical expertise to FETP residents deployed to investigate and respond to disease outbreaks. FETPs provide service to ministries of health while also providing hands-on experience in field-based research methods and evidence-based decision-making.

Building Workforce Capacity – FETPs provide training in applied epidemiology to build a cadre of in-country field epidemiologists ("disease detectives") capable of using data to detect and respond to well-known public health threats and emerging infectious diseases of human and animal origin.

On-the-job Practical Experience – FETPs are typically two year, in-service training programs modeled after the U.S. Epidemic Intelligence Service, an applied epidemiology training program created by CDC in 1951. FETPs emphasize practical experience, with residents spending less than 25% of their time in the classroom and the remaining 75% or more of their time conducting field work under the supervision and guidance of an experienced mentor. More than 80% of graduates stay in their home countries. Many graduates obtain leadership positions within the public health system.



FETPs with Current or Past CDC Support



Working with partners to establish FETPs – CDC’s FETP Branch works closely with ministries of health and other partners to establish, strengthen, and build sustainable FETPs. CDC leverages its technical expertise and collaborates with other U.S. government agencies (the U.S. Agency for International Development, U.S. Department of Defense, and U.S. Department of State), the World Health Organization, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and the World Bank to build workforce capacity. The agency also partners with, among others, the Training Programs in Epidemiology and Public Health Interventions Network (TEPHINET) and regional FETP networks to share resources and best practices and expand its global reach. For more information on these networks, please visit www.tephinet.org.

Accomplishments

Since 1980, FETP has established 54 programs and produced 3100+ graduates from 72 countries

2013

Graduated 283 residents, launched 2 new programs, and provided 2200 participants with short-course training

602 residents improved public health outcomes through 345 outbreak investigations, 204 planned studies, and 247 surveillance evaluations and analyses

2014 Ebola Outbreak

Over 50 FETP staff, residents and graduates have supported the Ebola response efforts in West Africa and U.S. since July 2014

Nigeria FELTP residents and staff contributed significantly to the containment of Ebola in Nigeria

Future Direction

- Launch the West Africa FETP in January 2015 to increase the region’s capacity to detect, respond, and prevent the spread of diseases
- Train frontline governmental public health workers from the Ebola-affected region in fundamental epidemiology skills
- Ensure quality training for all FETP residents by working to establish an FETP accreditation process and standards
- Enhance country capacity for surveillance and outbreak response at all levels of the public health system
- Build capacity within critical disease specific programs (e.g., HIV, TB, malaria, polio)
- Continue establishing new FETPs in low- and middle resource countries

November 2014