



Workshop participants interact during the 10th TEPHINET Global Scientific Conference in October 2019 (credit: Tom Smarch).

TEPHINET 2020-2030 LEARNING STRATEGY OVERVIEW

A global learning strategy to ensure a well-trained and professional global field epidemiology workforce prepared to address evolving public health priorities.

Get in touch:

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About TEPHINET Learning

Training Programs in Epidemiology and Public Health Interventions Network (TEPHINET) is the global network of Field Epidemiology Training Programs (FETPs) working across more than 100 countries. FETPs develop the capabilities of field epidemiologists through in-field working opportunities, mentoring, and formal training, and thereby develop the workforce that will respond to public health needs including emergencies. The TEPHINET Secretariat provides management and learning support to FETPs and graduates.

While TEPHINET has been successful in overseeing the implementation and management of specific learning projects, it was TEPHINET's goal to define and lead a more comprehensive initiative. TEPHINET began a formalized learning program to support its fundamental work of building and strengthening an agile and dynamic global network of FETP members that can confront and manage modern challenges related to global health security. Specifically, this program addresses TEPHINET's strategic goal of supporting learning within the global FETP community in collaboration with the regional FETP networks and programs. In order to meet this goal, TEPHINET established the FETP Learning Advisory Council (FLAC) and together created a network-wide learning strategy to guide the network learning goals into the future.

Learning is a cross-cutting theme, and, according to target audiences, works across programs and projects, including Accreditation and TEPHINConnect, the other flagship programs of TEPHINET.

Context for Developing a Learning Strategy

This 10-year Learning Strategy sets out the future vision of learning within the global FETP network and the goals to achieve that vision. The TEPHINET Secretariat together with the FETP Learning Advisory Council (FLAC) developed this Learning Strategy in response to:

- The rapidly changing public health landscape and need for updated field epidemiology competencies
- TEPHINET's mission to support continuous learning within the global FETP community
- The 2018 Global Field Epidemiology Roadmap and 2019 Implementation Plan, which called for modernizing FETP for the 21st century, and for assuring high quality FETPs
- Increasingly ubiquitous modern learning and working approaches
- Enabling the TEPHINET vision, mission, and values



Participants engage in a session about TEPHINET's learning strategy during the 10th TEPHINET Global Scientific Conference in October 2019 (credit: Tom Smarch).

Purpose of the Learning Strategy

The purpose of this Learning Strategy is to:

- Develop a vision for the future of learning within TEPHINET and the FETP network.
- Address the current and long-term learning needs of FETP trainers/mentors, learners (FETP trainees, fellows, and residents), and alumni.
- Consider new ways of working and learning, both in person and virtually.
- Guide programmatic updates and modernization of FETPs.
- Position TEPHINET as a learning enabler and learning thought leader for FETP global network.

Approach

This Learning Strategy was developed over a 10-month period with input from multiple sources:

- Interviews with 24 key informants within TEPHINET, the Secretariat, the FETP network, and partners within the FETP Enterprise
- Workshops and meetings with key stakeholders, FLAC members, Working Groups, and the TEPHINET Advisory Board
- Global survey of 52 FETP Program Directors (or their Learning Focal Points) and 4 Regional FETP Network representatives
- Global survey of 193 FETP alumni
- Two external learning consultants
- Existing TEPHINET documentation and relevant external resources
- Research of the current learning landscape and adult learning theory

The collective input was used to conduct a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis and determine the primary learning needs and opportunities for growth and learning enhancement.

Desired Future State

Each FETP has its own structure, curricula, format, model, staff structure and recruitment practices. Additionally, FETPs face a plethora of local and cultural challenges such as changing staff conditions, unique political climates, and funding limitations. As such, this Learning Strategy strives to balance what can be achieved globally while allowing enough flexibility for FETPs to cater to their local needs and conditions. With this context, the desired future state of TEPHINET is positioned below.

- Programs: In-field learning and mentoring experiences that are second-to-none; a globally vetted, competency-based curricula; impactful modern learning solutions.
- FETP Learning Community: Professional development opportunities for FETP staff; a global culture of sharing and collaboration; strengthened learning support role of Regional Networks; continuous learning for alumni; a professional credentialing program.
- TEPHINET Secretariat: Learning leadership and driver of learning strategic change; primary learning hub that supports network learning initiatives.

Strategic Focus Areas and Goals

TEPHINET will achieve the future state through 15 goals grouped into 6 focus areas.

TEPHINET NETWORK LEARNING HUB <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build learning leadership and drive learning culture change. Strengthen TEPHINET as the central communication hub for network-wide learning initiatives. 	HIGH QUALITY LEARNING EXPERIENCES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measure and improve learning outcome quality. Update global learner core competencies and program curricula to reflect current field epidemiology workforce needs. Modernize learning solutions and experiences to reflect the new and personalized ways that people want to learn. 	WORKFORCE UPSKILLING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enable alumni to update their knowledge/skills on a continuous basis. Improve the global learning response during public health emergencies.
ROBUST FETP STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve mentors' and trainers' capabilities to deliver high impact learning experiences. Establish centers of excellence for mentoring and training services. 	GLOBAL CULTURE OF SHARING KNOWLEDGE AND RESOURCES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the 'gold standard' learning solutions that will be eligible for global sharing. Manage a central content repository featuring curated learning resources and instructional materials. Centralize access to high quality, reputable training. Facilitate social learning, collaboration, and networking within the FETP learning community. 	PROGRESSIVE EVOLUTION AND GROWTH <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen the Regional Network learning support model. Professionalize the discipline of Field Epidemiology.

TEPHINET and the FLAC are responsible for leading the Learning Strategy, executing its directions, measuring its outcomes, and refreshing the strategy and goals on an annual basis. Three Working Groups are responsible for identifying/prioritizing key initiatives and implementation planning.

While the goal is to effect change as quickly as possible, the specific timeframes for implementation will be defined incrementally with consideration to: COVID-19 delays and future effects of this pandemic, funding opportunities, and resource allocations.

Critical Success Factors

To enable the success of the strategy and achieve the strategic goals, TEPHINET will address several critical success factors:

- Streamline learning efforts and optimize use of funds among FETP Enterprise members.
- Improve operations, communications, and collaboration within/across TEPHINET Secretariat work areas.
- Procure diversified, dependable, and ongoing sources of funding.
- Prepare for emergency response during public health emergencies.

Measuring Success

Measuring and monitoring progress is paramount in ensuring TEPHINET is achieving the goals in this Learning Strategy. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are the measurable values that will allow TEPHINET to clearly see change as progression is made over a ten-year period.

A detailed Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) plan is available and features:

- The outputs/outcomes of each learning strategy goal
- KPIs for each output/outcome, which are binary or measurable values that demonstrate which outputs have been completed and/or how effectively goals are being accomplished
- The method in which the KPIs will be measured/verified



Participants of a November 2019 workshop in Kampala, Uganda on epidemiology in humanitarian emergencies engage in an activity (credit: AFENET).

Once implementation plans are complete, TEPHINET can update the M&E plan to capture the target figures/measures desired over a specified period of time. As new key initiatives are planned, new KPIs should be added to the M&E plan and aligned with specific outcomes and measures.

The KPIs (together with the Learning Strategy) should be updated each year as measures are evaluated, the key initiatives are defined, and as TEPHINET gains more clarity and intelligence.

Benefits to the Network

Accomplishing the goals in this strategy will translate to the following benefits for the FETP network:

- An FETP network that is unified and globally connected while acknowledging and reflecting the diversity of the public health environments.
- A field epidemiology workforce with the critical and current competencies required to respond to public health emergencies while participating in the program, upon graduation, and thereafter.
- Stronger learning engagement and knowledge retention rates through improved and modernized learning solutions.
- Fewer days in classroom formal settings and more time for in-field learning, where digitized learning solutions can replace classroom sessions.
- Savings in local training development costs due to reduction in duplication of effort to develop commonly needed learning solutions.
- And many more benefits which are featured in the Impacts sections of each goal.

Conclusion

TEPHINET and the FLAC are confident that with the right investment and resources, this Learning Strategy will deliver the desired future state and produce significant quality outcomes for all stakeholders. Countries can rely on FETPs to produce a competent field epidemiology workforce and strengthen their capacity to detect and respond to public health threats.

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