

February 2022

Welcome....

to our February 2022 latest news update. CORDS is a program of Ending Pandemics, comprised of six regional networks:

APEIR - [the Asia Partnership on Emerging Infectious Disease Research](#)

EAIDSNet - [the East African Integrated Disease Surveillance Network](#)

MBDS - [the Mekong Basin Disease Surveillance Foundation](#)

MECIDS - the Middle East Consortium on Infectious Disease Surveillance

SACIDS - [SACIDS Foundation for One Health](#)

SECID - [the South East European Center for Surveillance and Control of Infectious Diseases](#)

The CORDS networks work to to reduce and prevent the spread of diseases by exchanging information and best practice. Our vision is a world united against infectious diseases. Early detection of outbreaks helps keep disease transmission to its area of origin, which, in our increasingly mobile world, is vital to stopping life threatening diseases such as Covid-19, Zika, Ebola and Yellow Fever. The collective expertise of the CORDS networks and their close relationships with local communities facilitates timely detection and response to outbreaks.


MBDS celebrates twenty-one years

This year the Mekong Basin Disease Surveillance Foundation ([MBDS](#)), a self-organized regional network celebrates its 21st anniversary. To celebrate its achievements in the public health arena, the network has produced a short video [glance at MBDS](#) as well as [MBDS Executive Board and Country Coordinators](#) from Cambodia, China, Lao P.D.R, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam, to express its appreciation and gratitude to all development partners and stakeholders for all their tremendous support. Continuing their efforts to strengthen national and regional capabilities in infectious disease surveillance, inter-regional collaboration, outbreak response and information sharing to control public health threats rapidly and effectively, the Thailand Ministry of Public Health will chair the network this year.

MBDS has published '[Reflections of A Public Health Professional](#)', developed by H.E Dr. Myint Htwe, Union Minister for Ministry of Health and Sports, Myanmar (2016-2021), a public health professional with vast experience both nationally and internationally. The book consisting of two parts, public health and research, aims to support health practitioners, public health professionals, researchers, policy makers, epidemiologists and health program implementers to achieve more effective and efficient public health interventions. Topics such as public health approaches, policy analysis and rational decision making, research and health policy formulation, health care reform, universal health coverage, the One-Health approach with multi-sectoral involvement, tripartite collaboration and sustainable development of public health system strengthening, population health and health information systems are included. The document is also intended to strengthen public health mechanisms, coordination mechanisms, research institutions capacity and the development of evidence-based interventions, especially for low- and middle-income countries.

Visit the MBDS website to access their [monthly newsletters](#) and regular [regional alerts](#).



Middle East Consortium on Infectious Disease and Surveillance

Search For Common Ground - Jerusalem

INTRODUCTION

Search for Common Ground (Search) has facilitated MECIDS since its founding in 2002. MECIDS is a trilateral, non-official organization formed by leading public health officials from Israel, the Palestinian Territories, and Jordan, in addition to academic experts in the region and internationally. By building trust and mutual professional respect between individuals and institutions, MECIDS works towards peace at the socio-political level by offering a working model of effective cross-border cooperation, even during conflict.

Responding to Covid-19 in the Middle East

Using funding from the European Union, the Middle East Consortium on Infectious Disease Surveillance (MECIDS), facilitated by Search for Common Ground, was able to rapidly respond to the Covid-19 pandemic, improving individual and institutional cooperation among the Israeli, Jordanian and Palestinian public health sectors. This work, described in an online report in more detail, included:

- 12 virtual lectures, seminars, and awareness sessions
- Common Ground Training (CGT) of 24 laboratory technicians and infectious disease researchers in non-adversarial communication, active listening and empathy.
- Ten emergency virtual meetings which allowed participants to improve their country's response through the exchange of data and information
- MECIDS custom training of trainers (TOT) on the use of serological tools for immunity assessment, sero-epidemiological infection studies among health care workers before and after immunization and laboratory methods for detection.

The network has also co-authored a scientific article on their experience of Covid-19 in the region, which is pending publication.

Read the report in full here:

<https://www.cordsnetwork.org/news/responding-to-covid-19-in-the-middle-east/>



Heroes of the Pandemic: Afyadata

On his 7 December 2021 blog GatesNotes, Bill Gates highlighted some of Africa's heroes who have been working to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic and to seek to prevent those in the future. Afyadata from the [SACIDS Foundation for One Health](#) was praised for its important work at the community level. The following passage is taken from the blog:

Even as the world seeks to end the current Covid-19 pandemic, we need to also be thinking about how to prevent future pandemics. That's just what a mobile app called Afyadata is helping health officials do in Tanzania. Designed by the Southern African Center for Infectious Disease Surveillance (SACIDS), [Afyadata](#) is a digital surveillance tool that allows health workers and even ordinary people to serve as disease detectives. Users can report unusual health occurrences not only in humans, but also animals. Monitoring animals is critical because most new pathogens start in animals before they spread and sicken humans. With the app, farmers can easily report any suspicious illness among their livestock to health officials, who can then quickly follow up with further investigation, if necessary. While this app is still being piloted in several districts of Tanzania and other parts of Africa, it has already been effective in the detection and identification of several small disease outbreaks. I look forward to learning more about Afyadata's progress.

Watch the Afyadata video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gtiwCefU-VI>



Image: Briefing meeting at the Prime Minister's Office- Disaster Management Department

Strengthening Capacity for Tanzania National One Health Early Detection of and Response to Infectious Disease Epidemics (OneHealthDetect-TZ)

SACIDS Foundation for One Health is enhancing initiatives by the Tanzanian Government towards strengthening its capacity for the national health security agenda, national action plans for health security and for One Health coordination. SACIDS Foundation for One Health will develop a digital platform for National One Health multi-sectoral collaboration for epidemiological intelligence to facilitate official early detection and response to infectious disease outbreaks

Through its member institutions, the Foundation will collaborate with the relevant Tanzania Government structures in improving their ability to detect disease events, signals, or related information at source geographically or zoologically. Data will be processed promptly for early warning and response helping to prevent outbreaks.

The platform will be designed so that stakeholders' health information technology systems are interoperable; making the right data available to authorized personnel at the right time in a way that can be relied upon and meaningfully used by recipients.

This dashboard will enable the [Prime Minister's Office](#), [President's Office Regional Administration and Local Government \(PORALG\)](#) and Sectorial Ministries (responsible for public health, animal health and natural resources) to regularly review situations and take action for detection, verification, risk assessment, risk communication, early warning and response.

The OneHealthDetect – TZ project, funded by [Ending Pandemics](#) and [The Rockefeller Foundation](#) aims to:

- Strengthen event-based surveillance (EBS) for Sector Ministries
- Set up a hotline and media center at the One Health Coordination Desk
- Link the National One Health Coordination Desk with Sector Ministries through a shared digital dashboard for EBS
- Evaluate the timeliness of notification and national response to multi-sectorial outbreaks

The operationalization of the project including setting up of the One Health digital platform will be done collaboratively with the One Health Coordination Desk, under the mandate of the Disaster Management Department of the Prime Minister's office (PMO-DMD).

For more information contact Prof Esron Karimuribo karimuribo@sua.ac.tz



SECID hold Integrated Infectious Diseases System Training

On 28 October 2021, the South East European Center for Surveillance and Control of Infectious Diseases ([SECID](#)) launched a training program series on their Integrated Infectious Diseases System in Albania (SISI). The first session was on SISI for epidemiologists from the National Institute of Public Health as well as those from the Albanian Directories of Public Health Districts. The training was organized in the form of a series of exercises, with the main topics including notifications, case investigation and contact tracing.

From 1 to 3 December 2021, SECID organized a further three-day training session on Influenza Like Illness (ILI), Severe Acute Respiratory Infections (SARI) and Covid-19 surveillance. The first two days saw training with participants from hospitals in Tirana, Albania, as well as district epidemiologists. Topics included the purpose and function of SARI surveillance, virological surveillance, and data entry on the SISI system. The final day covered Ili surveillance. Participants from health centers in Tirana who work on Ili reporting forms took part. Overall, approximately 100 people took part in the program.

For more information on SISI contact:

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For more information on Ili/Sari surveillance contact:

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Successful conclusion of the Partnership for AMR Surveillance Excellence Initiative

The two-year Fleming Fund Regional AMR surveillance grant to Ending Pandemics/CORDS comes to a successful completion in February 2022. The culmination of the Partnership for AMR Surveillance Excellence (PARSE) initiative was highlighted with two AMR Seminars discussing the results of the implementation of AMR surveillance protocols in Tanzania (SACIDS: A protocol for surveillance of multi

drug resistant bacteria causing community-acquired urinary tract infections), and Ghana (MECIDS/University of Ghana: Non-typhoid Salmonella, Klebsiella pneumoniae isolated from human, animal and environmental sources).

An audience of over 140 stakeholders were in attendance representing CORDS surveillance networks, country and regional government stakeholders, FAO, the World Bank, and donor partners. Dissemination of results to stakeholders and regional authorities promotes advocating the improvements needed for one health approach to AMR surveillance at national and regional levels. The PARSE project exemplifies a one health investment, with both pilot implementations involving collaborative multi-sectoral governance of AMR. PARSE responded to data and evidence gaps to enhance appropriate use of antibiotics in low- and middle-income countries and to underscore the need to sustain regional mechanisms for AMR surveillance.

From the initial formulation of the grant by the CORDS Secretariat and the CORDS surveillance networks in 2018, the focus has been on the collection and analysis of data using common protocols and approaches that would guide adoption of one health surveillance. The aim was to draw on best practices, scientific literature and identified need to infuse standardization and harmonization in the implementation methodology. The following groups were key members of the Fleming Fund Regional grant:

- Asia Partnership on Emerging Infectious Diseases Research (APEIR)
- Khesar Gyalpo University of Medicinal Sciences of Bhutan/Bhutan One Health Centre
- The East African Integrated Disease Surveillance Network (EAIDSNet)
- Eastern Mediterranean Public Health Network (EMPHNET)
- The Mekong Basin Disease Surveillance Foundation (MBDS)
- The Middle East Consortium on Infectious Disease Surveillance (MECIDS)
- Pakistan One Health Alliance (POHA)
- SACIDS Foundation for One Health (SACIDS)
- The Southeast European Center for Surveillance and Control of Infectious Diseases (SECIDS)

These groups conducted a mapping and gap analysis to better understand the relative contributions of each sector, learn what surveillance protocols already exists, and identify gaps and priorities for regional AMR surveillance. Following development of multisectoral AMR surveillance protocols, two protocols were chosen to be piloted in the Fleming Fund priority countries of Tanzania and Ghana.

The long-term aim is to establish national reference centers for AMR surveillance where none exist and build a comprehensive and sustainable network of sentinel sites that can provide high quality standardized representative data in each sector. The two pilot study teams in Ghana and Tanzania are exploring adoption models and sustainability. We are grateful to the UK Department of Health and Social Care and the Mott MacDonald management agent for the Fleming Fund grant programme. I would like to thank the technical steering committees from both years, Kathryn Roberts and Lauren Diaz for their work on this project, as well as Jessica Shao for her support in year two.

The PARSE project has demonstrated trusted partnerships and cooperation to build capacity, yielding quality laboratory bacteriology diagnostics and planning and policy and regional cooperation. To our PARSE members, you have my deep respect for your leadership and trust as we made this two-year journey together. We are especially grateful for the efforts of our academic and ministry partners in balancing the needs of this project with the priority demands of the Covid-19 pandemic.

By Louise Gresham.

For more information on the AMR protocols, contact info@endingpandemics.org

The epidemics that never happened

Covid-19 has dominated the media landscape since late 2019. Less well publicised however, are the stories of pandemics that never happened due to preparedness and decisive action. Resolve to Save Lives, a program of Vital Strategies, is calling for colleagues in the public health community to share their

successes. The organization's [2021 report](#) includes insights into the prevention of Yellow Fever in Brazil, Ebola in Uganda, Anthrax in Kenya and Monkey Pox in Nigeria, as well as effective Covid-19 proactive strategies Africa, Mongolia and Vietnam.

If your organization has a positive story of your role in helping to stop an infectious disease outbreak, Resolve to Save Lives would love to hear it. Fill in the short form below and if chosen you will be fully supported to develop the material into a case study for the 2022 report:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/7GK6WLJ>

For more information visit:

<https://preventepidemics.org/epidemics-that-didnt-happen/submissions/>

Other Articles

Systematizing the One Health Approach in Preparedness and Response Efforts for Infectious Disease Outbreaks: Proceedings of a Workshop. Link to the PDF from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine:

<https://www.nap.edu/catalog/26301/systematizing-the-one-health-approach-in-preparedness-and-response-efforts-for-infectious-disease-outbreaks>



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